

WHAT IF HE CAME?

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By

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS book, which purports to be the description of a dream, is founded upon an experience which the author had while reading the Gospel of St. Mark on the Mount of Olives during Holy Week and Easter 1928, at the time of the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council.

His expectation, based upon the experience of a previous visit, had been that a study of the Gospels in the haunts of Jesus would help him to attain a clearer picture of the actual incidents there related as they were enacted on that Palestinian stage nearly 2000 years ago. Instead, what happened was that he found himself imagining those same scenes re-enacted in his own country to-day.

A holiday in Wales in the summer of 1929 gave him the opportunity of putting these dreams and imaginings on paper. Later he

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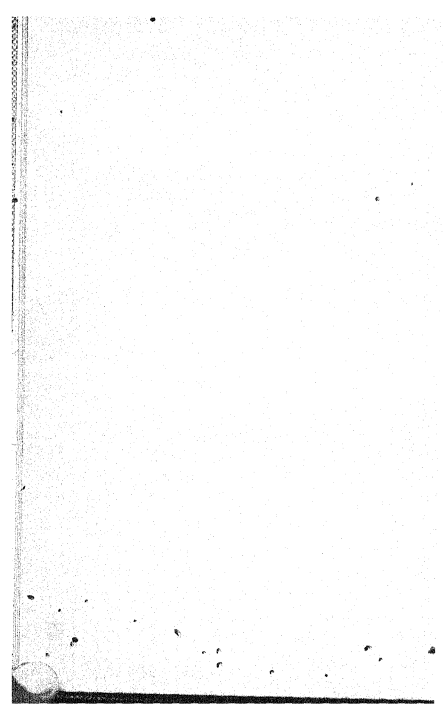
discovered that they were capable of helping others besides himself, and so they have been published.

It should perhaps be pointed out that what the author conceives of as a re-enactment to-day of scenes that took place 2000 years ago must not necessarily be looked upon as his *explanation* of what actually took place then. In some cases it would be so, in others not, and in the case of the final scenes quite obviously not.

It will help the reader if, before he starts to read, he grasps the general plan of this book. Let it be understood then that John Markham's introduction describes an incident in the mission field which is supposed to take place some time during the decade 1960-70. In it the old missionary Simon Rockwell, in reminiscent mood, tells the story of his association with the Great Teacher in earlier days. The remainder of the book describes Simon Rockwell's recol-

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lections of happenings which took place at a time more or less contemporary with our own, but closes with an incident which makes clear that all that has gone before must be thought of as part of a dream. This little book, therefore, is not an addition to the many lives of Christ that at present exist but is rather *a meditation* on the Gospel of St. Mark, taking the form of *an imaginative reconstruction in terms of to-day of the words and scenes described in that Gospel*.



JOHN MARKHAM'S INTRODUCTION

It was towards the end of the rainy season. The Surinar river was in flood and the roads had gone. My Mission station was cut off from any communication with the outside world, and was likely to continue to be so for some time. It was nothing to worry about. We were used to it happening at this time of the year, and in any case we are at the back of beyond in a sort of pocket in the Himalayas. Even in these days of enormously simplified communications we are under normal circumstances pretty much "on our own."

I cannot pretend that it is exactly a healthy spot towards the end of the rainy season. That worried me a bit on this occasion because Simon Rockwell, my chief, was marooned with me, and he was getting old, and it was clear that he could not stand what he used to in his early days. Somehow

or other he had always seemed to like to come and stay with us. On many occasions previously he had told me about his earlier life, but on this occasion he made me feel that he was very deliberately reminiscent, almost as though in his reminiscences he was making his last will and testament. And so, having little else to occupy me, and feeling a certain solemnity in being the repository of his confidences, I took the opportunity of jotting down these reminiscences of his. As a matter of fact, he said very little about himself. His influence in the Mission field was practically supreme. With the possible exception of Paulsen, who was easily the most intrepid pioneer missionary of our times, he was the greatest man I ever knew or ever shall know.

It is common knowledge that in his early days Rockwell was somewhat hot-tempered and self-opinionated. I knew that at one time there was a rather sharp difference of opinion

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on a matter of Mission policy between him and Paulsen. I rather think that in this Paulsen, who was the aggressor, was distinctly in the right. Anyhow, whatever Rockwell's early mistakes may have been, he gave me the impression of having wonderfully mellowed as the years went by, and I was not really surprised that his reminiscences on the whole told me so little about himself and so much about the Great Teacher who shaped his life. It has been a wonderful thing for me that I have known and indeed have been the intimate companion of both Rockwell and Paulsen. Both are gone now.

The doctor in charge of our hospital in the valley on the other side of this mountain range is the man to write about Paulsen. He saw more of him than I did. He has a literary gift too which I do not pretend to possess. He is the obvious man to write the history of this great Mission of ours in the high places of Central Asia, and indeed,

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for the sake of our converts, I expect he will some day also write a more serious biography of the Great Teacher. Be that as it may, I have no doubt that it is my business to get down on paper Rockwell's reminiscences as he told them to me, and to make them accessible for others. For behind him and Paulsen and all of us, the fount and inspiration and persistent cause of our Mission is the figure of the Great Teacher, about whom Rockwell's reminiscences, which I shall now attempt to transcribe, are almost solely concerned.

In what follows, then, you will understand that Rockwell is speaking and that I am merely, as best I can, recording his words.

THE REMINISCENCES OF SIMON
ROCKWELL

You have heard of Zecherson, the revivalist. If you had actually heard him, as I did many a time, certainly you would never forget him.

It is long since I was in the old country. They tell me that people do not listen much to sermons nowadays and that a man like Zecherson would not get much of a hearing now. I wonder! I don't think people alter much from one generation to another, but I imagine it is difficult for people to-day to realise the influence Zecherson had on his generation, for he really was unique. Of course there have been great prophets from time to time in the religious history of our race, and of other races too for that matter, and in a sense Zecherson was in the succession of these, but I cannot help feeling that he was in a class by himself. His authority

was amazing, and yet, as I shall prove to you, it was the authority of an essentially humble man.

One unusual thing about him which illustrates this authority was that, instead of going to men he made men come to him. What I mean is that the prophet is usually a man who goes to the haunts of men and prophesies where men cannot help but hear him. Zecherson did nothing of the sort. I do not think I ever saw him in a city. He loathed cities and he despised most of the external trappings of our so-called modern civilisation. Wearing only the simplest clothes, he camped out, usually in some rather inaccessible place.

You may wonder how it was that people heard of him and came to him. I confess I wondered myself, for he never courted publicity and despised self-advertisement, treating rich and poor alike and not allowing any person, still less any organisation, to

"boost" him; but notwithstanding, it almost seemed that the more he kept to himself the more people wanted to meet him, and they came to him literally by the thousand—all sorts of people, miners and quarrymen, farmers and shepherds, clergy and ministers, rich business and professional men from the Midlands and the South Wales towns, and even from London and other far-away places in England and Scotland.

When I joined him he was preaching at a little place that you may never have heard of in the Black Mountains. It was quite a problem getting there, a still greater problem to get back to any place where one could spend the night in any comfort. The few inns near at hand were all full up and beds in the near-by farm-houses and villages were at a premium; but he did not seem to mind very much what happened to those who came out to listen to his message.

I expect he thought that a night out in

the open in the rain would do some of us a power of good. At least that is the impression he gave me, and I daresay he was right. He made us all feel flabby and pampered and soft, even those of us who had had a pretty hard life before we came under his influence.

Certainly part of his power lay in the fact that he was a man with just one burning message. He conceived himself as a forerunner preparing the way for some new manifestation of God in the life of the Church, perhaps—though this he would not actually affirm—a second coming of Christ, and it was in view of this that his one demand of all of us was repentance. He took the greatest trouble to assure himself of the reality of the penitence of those who at his invitation rose up in his meetings, came out before all the assembled people, and, kneeling in a row before him, confessed their sins. It was then his custom to pray over each one individually. He

seemed to have a certain intuition which told him whether a man's penitence was real or not.

The most amazing exhibition of this intuition that I witnessed was in relation to him whom we afterwards came to call the Great Teacher. The incident will also illustrate for you Zecherson's real humility. It was towards evening and the crowd had thinned when these two met. They had, I think, known each other before, certainly they were relatives and had heard of one another. The change that came over Zecherson when he found himself face to face with this distant relative of his was remarkable. In a moment the denunciation and the righteous indignation and the hatred of sin all seemed to melt away and to be replaced by an overwhelming sense of the holy. The awe-inspiring, masterful preacher, who always gave one the impression that he feared no one but God



and would do honour to no one but God, became a servant overpoweringly conscious of his own unimportance in comparison to the one who was now with him, and who was utterly his master, and yet there was this suddenly acquired new master of his "numbered with the transgressors," or so it seemed, kneeling before him in the company of a few broken penitents and asking for his prayers. For a moment it looked as though Zecherson would refuse to deal with him as one of that company of penitents that knelt before him, but some force over which he seemed to have no control prevailed and he went on with his work as though nothing unusual had taken place. It was then there occurred something which I find it hard to describe, for you see it did not happen *to me*, but to the Great Teacher, as I shall call him now—he who became Zecherson's master and mine.

It seemed as though there was given to

him at that moment some immediate and conscious contact with God, such as does not come even to the holiest of people normally in sacrament or prayer. His association with the penitence that opened a new life to us sinners did, it seemed, in some sense mean for him a new life, but it was an experience that was something other than is given to us sinful men. At the time I could not have begun to tell you what happened. Now I think I can, though even now I must speak in figurative language. Subsequent events seem to have interpreted for me that strange tumultuous moment. I know now that in that moment he, as it were, saw the heavens rent asunder and the barrier between heaven and earth torn away. He was in the immediate presence of God, a presence which fell upon him in so definite a way as to appear absolutely tangible, a presence so certain as to be articulate ; and out of the heavens came

a voice which assured him once and for all of his relationship to God and of his mission in and for the world.

In all this I had been only a very partial spectator; I was not near enough to hear and see all that went on. Even then there came over me also something of the awe that clearly possessed Zecherson in the presence of the Great Teacher, and I felt that I could no longer intrude upon them, so I slipped away; nor did I see the Great Teacher again for a long time. It was only afterwards that I heard what took place immediately after this incident, and then only through occasional references that he made to it in later days.

It seems that after this tremendous experience he felt impelled to seek the solitude of the mountains, and instead of going back to the place from which he had come he sought the silence of the mountains near at hand. Beyond the place where Zecherson

was preaching the road gets narrower and less and less used, and finally tails off into a mere track among the mountains. Driven by the new sense of vocation that had come to him the Great Teacher tramped along this track almost oblivious, as I should gather, of time and place and circumstance. After a while he left even this track. He wanted to be utterly alone and he started to climb up the steep sides of a little stream that tumbled down at that point to reach the larger river in the valley up which his path had come. The way became more and more wild and desolate, and night began to fall; and the clouds gathered around him, spiritually as well as physically. Almost subconsciously he sought some kind of shelter, and he found a little tumble-down disused shepherd's hut on the mountain-side; and there he sat down and apparently thereabouts he remained for upwards of a month, so intent upon the task of discovering the

full character of his vocation and the method of its fulfilment as to be oblivious of his bodily needs. From what he said to some of us later this must have been a time of extraordinary temptation, but if one is to say that at that time he was "tempted by Satan," it is certain also that one must add that in the end "the angels ministered unto him," for when he returned he was utterly serene, and that serenity never left him thereafter.

Well, you know how it went with Zecharson. In the end they killed him. I do not mean that they cut off his head—that kind of thing is not done nowadays, but they killed him none the less, or at any rate they condoned his death. You remember how openly he began to attack immorality in high places and how ruthlessly he exposed and attacked the whole seamy side of the race course and the dance hall. Many important people and popular favourites

came in for his castigation. The public got angry with him and so, of course, the newspapers for the most part sided against him and wrote of him as if he were a half-witted fanatic or a Pecksniff; and when in one of his rare visits to more populous resorts he got mishandled by a race-course gang and was so seriously injured that his working days were done, it was very generally held that "he had only got his deserts." "It wasn't any business of his to interfere with other people's pleasures," and so, in the popular phraseology, "he was asking for it"; anyhow, "he got it," and his voice was silenced. This was a great relief to certain important people who were very nervous as to what he was going to say and do next. The newspapers moralised on the dangers of fanaticism. Writers in the religious Press, while speaking with well-simulated horror of the race-gangs, made it quite clear that they could not possibly

condone the "excesses" and in general the whole course of the extra-ecclesiastical activities of Zecherson. In their different ways, without exception, the various organs of the religious Press criticised him and his work, chiefly, I think, because he did not belong to and could not possibly be placed in any one of the sects or parties which they served.

So Zecherson was silenced, and then it was that the Great Teacher started his mission which was so fundamentally to change my whole outlook on life and indeed the lives of all of us.

You will gather from what I shall subsequently tell you how different his methods were from those of his great forerunner Zecherson. He too preached repentance as his predecessor had done, but he did not use the methods of the revivalist and he moved in and out among men in a way that Zecherson never did; indeed he was in this respect almost the antithesis of Zecherson,

who kept himself apart from men while the Great Teacher was the most accessible person whom I ever met or heard of. Men, women and children would approach him at all times and in all places as if they had known him all their lives, and as if they were not conscious of any barrier between them and him. So much so that they were not really conscious of his extraordinary accessibility. They just took it for granted. From this you might imagine that there was no severity in his teaching, but you would be wrong. He preached repentance and expected penitence just as Zecherson did, but his preaching of it was positive, while Zecherson's, as I look back to it, was negative. (I would not have you think that in saying this I am criticising Zecherson. You must break up the earth before the seed can be sown. Zecherson ploughed the soil.) Moreover, the Great Teacher, while asking men to repent, always added to his call to penitence

a call to believe in the glorious message of freedom and power and newness of life which he brought them. It was this latter which seemed the chief part of his message. Indeed it was this part which almost always came first in the order of its proclamation. His emphasis was on a new way of life, where God Himself would have unquestioned and unimpeded rule in all the life and work and thought of men. This life was just waiting to be lived, capable of being lived now, only it could not be lived by men unless somehow they could really repent and believe in its possibility, really believe that God meant it, and was just waiting and yearning to bring it about. He was insistent upon this point. It was as though there was a whole new undiscovered country at our very doors waiting for us to enter now—a country where God ruled absolutely and men obeyed His rule absolutely, but a country into which men simply could not

go unless they loathed sin and loved and trusted God with all their heart and soul and mind. But I am digressing—what I am driving at will become clearer to you as I tell you some of the incidents of his life that I witnessed and some of his words that I heard.

Perhaps I had better tell you first of all how my brother and I came to join forces with the Great Teacher. I have told you that we had been disciples of Zecherson. But our break with our old life did not come then, although I suppose our preparation for the break did. I mean when eventually the Great Teacher called us to join him we were ready and we never for one moment hesitated. This was, of course, partly due to the compelling nature of the one who called us: "compelling" you understand, not "dominating." It is difficult to find

language to express the difference, although the difference is almost infinitely great. No, it was not just the majestic sense of vocation that accompanied his call which made us immediately follow him. We were not poor men, though most people would have thought of us as such, and we had laid aside sufficient, as we thought it, both for our own needs and the needs of our families, though our ideas of what was sufficient were, I suppose, different from those of many of our contemporaries. The influence of Zecherson had, I think, already effectively destroyed in us any desire for luxury. We really preferred simple things and a simple life and simple pleasures for ourselves, and so did those who were dependent on us. But his influence had done more. It had prepared us for action, and that is a very great thing indeed. It is one thing to desire to follow a leader, quite another thing actually to get on your feet

and start the process of following. We were ready for an active following of the Great Teacher when he called us. Ever since we had been with Zecherson we knew that something of this sort would happen sooner or later. Association with the Great Teacher already, short as it had been during the period of his association with Zecherson, had clinched the matter. It would not be true to say that we were waiting for the call, but we were ready for it. And when one day the Great Teacher suddenly came to us there on the jetty at Porth Llanfair as we were attending to our tackle and preparing our nets—for we were fishermen, you know—we just handed over everything to the others and joined him. Then we went on to another boat a little further along the jetty and he invited two friends of ours to join him as well. These men felt as we did about things, and their father also was in sympathy with all our hopes and religi-

ous aspirations. They too immediately responded to his call just as we had done. So there were four of us, myself and my brother Andrew and our friends James and John, who as the Great Teacher put it, half jokingly, were setting out to catch men instead of fish.

My experience is that only when you have actually embarked upon an undertaking do you begin to realise the relative importance of the various difficulties it presents, even if you have previously foreseen them. One of the greatest difficulties of our mission turned out to be that instead of going away from the haunts of men as Zecherson had done, we sought their company, and instead of pursuing some abnormal method of approach, such as he had, we used what might be described as the normal approaches to the hearts of men. Not until we had started on our mission did I realise that Zecherson, by cutting himself off from men,

had, as a matter of fact, taken the easier path; for by making no attempt to give his message and fulfil his mission through the ordinary channels provided by religious organisations, he had escaped innumerable difficulties and made his task thereby at once infinitely easier and infinitely less important. The way of the ascetic is a way of escape, and it is a way the Great Teacher would not take. I confess that at the outset I thought Zecherson's was the harder path and ours the easier. I soon came to change my mind.

Here were we, you understand, burning with a message to give. The ordinary channels through which it would seem such messages should be given were to our hand. But how were we to use them? You are not to imagine from this that at this time I had any message of my own that I myself was burning to deliver. My message was the Great Teacher himself. I wanted to

deliver him, so to speak. I wanted him to be listened to, him to be acclaimed, him to be followed. I was merely one of his party, little more than a camp follower. But how could he deliver his message through the "ordinary channels" ?

Take a place like Porth Llanfair, where my home was and where we started our work. Its population is somewhere in the region of three thousand. It has an ancient church with traditions going back to the early days of British Christianity; and it has, for its size, an extraordinary number of chapels with traditions which, if not so long as those of the Welsh Church, are, to their members, equally precious and just as sacred. Then just outside the town there is a little Roman Catholic institution with a chapel of its own; and in addition to all these there are two mission halls which do not seem to have any particular ecclesiastical connection—one belongs to the people

called Plymouth Brethren and the other was started as a private venture by a godly old layman some fifty years ago, in order to reach a type of individual who did not seem to be catered for, or at any rate was not reached, by the other religious communities in the place. This mission was now carried on by his son. Now the extraordinary thing is that when the Great Teacher came to Porth Llanfair the only place available for him at first was this little unattached mission hall. I do not want you to think he complained about this; he didn't, he just took it for granted—took it for granted in the sense that here at once was proof, if proof were desired, for the need of men's penitence. It was just what lay behind a condition of affairs like this that he meant to deal with. It was a disease, which had, as one of its symptoms, this radical lack of fellowship, that he came to expose and to cure. Again I do not want you for a moment to think

that he cut himself off from the life of the organised Churches. I never saw any sign of this. The sequel will show that they often cut him off, but he certainly did not cut himself off. As a child he had been brought up in a godly home and his attendance at the various means of grace which had been available for him was regular and systematic, and as far as was possible it continued to be so all the time I was with him. Of this matter I may have occasion to speak later, but the plain fact was that *as a layman*, with a prophetic message to give, the only places easily accessible to him, apart from the open air, were conventicles such as the one he actually used at the opening of our mission at Porth Llanfair. Afterwards at one period of his mission, most, though by no means all, of the denominational sanctuaries were open to him. But the initial difficulty was, as I have indicated, that the ordinary channels

whereby religious influences are brought to bear on the community were simply not available.

Well, to return to my story. On the Sunday of which I am thinking of he went into this little mission hall. Whether he had spoken previously to its leader or not I do not know, but anyway an opportunity soon presented itself for him to give his testimony. The place was well filled and the impression that he immediately made was simply overwhelming. Perhaps this is the right moment to say something about him as a teacher, because it was often, as on this occasion, his amazing capacity to *teach* which so impressed people. They had never heard anything like it before. Professional religious teachers of various kinds were familiar to them all. But this teacher was utterly different, and it was not only the clarity of his utterance and the simplicity and even homeliness of his illustration that went direct to their hearts

and understandings, it was a certain "otherness" which he possessed that made them feel that his words came with the authority of the most high God. Other men mediated truth; he *was* truth, if you understand what I mean.

I remember this occasion particularly because of something rather startling which took place during his preaching. As is always liable to happen in moments of deep corporate religious emotion, one of those present, a person presumably suffering from some functional nervous disorder, became violently excited. All of us were conscious of the presence of God, really overwhelmingly so, and there were moments when most of the people were awed and almost frightened by a feeling that they were near something unutterably holy. I cannot explain the sensation, I can only record it. This awful sense of the presence of God was too much for this distressed mind, and

the poor fellow rose from his place shouting and screaming. For a moment it seemed as though the meeting would break up in turmoil. But the teacher uttered what I can only describe as a word of command and the poor fellow gave a shout which sounded for all the world like a capitulation—like some mysterious acceptance by his will of an authority greater than the authority of the disease which held him in its grip. Then he sat quietly down in his seat and was immediately his own real self again. A calm that you could almost feel seemed suddenly to pervade the hall in which we were gathered. I do not think any of us had any doubt but that we had been witnesses of some outpouring of healing power which was different from anything we had seen before. After the meeting was over everybody was talking about it and about him to whose teaching they had been listening. Soon, I can assure you,

everybody in that part of Wales was talking about him.

After the meeting was over he went home with Andrew and me. I had sickness in the house. My mother-in-law was seriously ill and things, I am bound to say, were rather at sixes and sevens. Our home was a very simple affair. We did for ourselves, of course, and—well, you know what that means when there's illness in the house. So many people don't know it, though! and so cannot sympathise with and understand the problems of the homes of the people. The Great Teacher did. I never knew anyone like him for sensing a situation. I tell you he came into that home of mine with just the same serenity and awesome sense of power that had seemed to emanate from him in the meeting hall, and when rather apologetically my wife told him of her mother's illness he just seemed to take over the whole burden of the thing; he went with her straight

to her mother's room and took the sick woman's hand in his—well, all I can say is that something happened. I am not greatly interested in the explanation clever people give to these things, unless, having explained them, they can do them themselves or help somebody else to do them; all I know is that his influence was such that in a few minutes the house was running as though nobody had ever thought of illness and my mother-in-law was, as she normally was, my wife's greatest stand-by in all the work of the home.

That evening too was one that I shall never forget. Have you ever thought how many people there are around you who are suffering either in mind or body or soul? Just occasionally it comes over me and really I can hardly bear it. Fortunately, I do not seem to be able to concentrate upon it. My mind switches off on to something else and for the moment the strain of it all ceases. But I believe this

consciousness of the presence of suffering was always with the Great Teacher, and somehow he was big enough to endure it. That evening the sick and the suffering from all over the town came to my house, and he healed many of them—and here is a curious thing. Normally what a hubbub there would be if a crowd gathered around somebody's house in circumstances like this. In point of fact that crowd was silent almost like the crowds during the silence of an Armistice day. He held them all in the thralldom of a peace which was beyond understanding. At the time nobody felt that it needed to be explained ; but I have, I confess, asked myself since how much of the healing which took place that night and at other times was due just to the pervading presence of that peace. His possession of an astonishing quality of peace was always apparent, and to those of us who were near him it was given to know something of

how he acquired and maintained it. You will recollect what a tremendously heavy day he had had on this occasion of which I am speaking, though as you never saw power visibly go out from him in the healing of poor sick folk, I do not believe you can really understand the strain of such a day. Even for those of us who just watched, the strain was almost more than we could bear. Yet long before daylight he was up and about. All the rest of us were asleep, or we should have tried to dissuade him from doing what he actually did.

I do not think you have ever been to Porth Llanfair, have you? It is in its way a busy little place, but it is right on the edge of some of the wildest and most inaccessible country in Wales. From the back of my little house you can go straight up a valley which is very wild and quite uninhabited except for a few sheep and an occasional shepherd, whose wonderful dogs do most

of the work of shepherding on such hill-sides. Up the valley runs an old disused road, and when we found he was not in his room, I guessed that the master had gone there to get quiet for the prayer and meditation with which he always began the day. But I did not bargain for what had actually happened.

After going on for a little and seeing no sign of him, I was just turning back thinking he must have gone in some other direction after all, when I saw an old shepherd on the hill-side and, coming up with him, I learned that the Great Teacher was far up the valley. The old shepherd had been out early and had been surprised to see up near a disused quarry a man in the attitude of prayer. He saw him, he said, from the other side of the valley. He was quite positive about it and seemed to be certain that it was the person I was enquiring after. I went back home and, after we had had a

bite of food, all four of us started up the valley.

It really was rather worrying, because the people in Porth Llanfair were immensely impressed by his words and work of the day before, and already at breakfast time the crowds were around the house again. It seemed to us a great opportunity for our mission that the Great Teacher was losing. I did not understand either his mission or his method then as I do now; and, as a matter of fact, I thought it really rather foolish and unpractical and feeble of him to let an opportunity like this slip. People do not care to wait about for somebody who doesn't turn up. It was almost like failing to keep an engagement to speak—the hall packed with people, you know, and the speaker not turning up. You cannot do that sort of thing indefinitely, people don't like it. Not that he had promised to meet with them again, but we all took for granted

he would, which, so far as our feelings were concerned, amounted to much the same thing. So off we went, and a couple of hours later, mark you, we found him and, I confess, I really was upset with him. We told him how all the people were waiting for him and all he said was : "Let us go on. We must preach in the other towns. That is what I came to do, that is what I must put first. However important the healing of bodies may be (and so important is it that I have positively to fight the inclination to spend all my time on it), the healing of the soul comes first. They are in no mood now in Porth Llanfair to think about their souls, they can only think about their bodies ; so we must go elsewhere." And on we went. There was no alternative. I never could argue with him ; though, as you know well, I am quite capable of arguing with most people.

There and then, as we walked on, we made

a sort of itinerary. Andrew went back to tell them at home what was happening and to get our stuff and bring it on to the place where we intended to spend the next night.—Andrew always did that kind of thing—you never met him, I think.—Life became a much harder thing for many people when he “passed over.”—He would have no difficulty in getting there in advance of us because he would be going by train or motor ’bus, while we were tramping it. And by the way all through our mission we almost always walked, finding that rapid transport more often than not meant scamped work—(it is a real difficulty in this modern civilisation of ours that so many people mistake hurry and hustle and bustle for work, when of course they are so often just waste of time). I confess that as I thought of our programme I was less worried when I considered that the news of him would quickly travel up the valleys, and that, although the crowds at Porth Llanfair

would be disappointed, there would be other crowds elsewhere. And so it proved. During the next few weeks we tramped through Caernarvon and Anglesey, Denbigh, Merioneth and Montgomery, and everywhere we went he preached. When they would let him he preached in the various places of worship, and soon most of these, though by no means all, were open to him. In many places too, the kind of healings we had seen in Porth Llanfair were repeated.

I remember one poor fellow especially; he was the victim of a particularly loathsome disease and he waylaid the Great Teacher and, kneeling down before him, begged to be healed. We others must have looked askance at him and were certainly incredulous and hopeless at the spectacle of such a case, for this was a different kind of disease from the others that had been healed. But the poor fellow turned away from us and riveting his eyes on the Great Teacher he said—and

he obviously meant it—"If you will, I know you can." Then I saw something I shall never forget. I have told you that the disease was loathsome. I saw an exquisitely tender look come into the eyes of the Great Teacher and he put his hand out and touched him, not as you or I might touch a noisome thing, but almost as though he were fondling this poor outcast human being. I knew then that all sense of the loathsomeness of disease was for him drowned in a great sea of pitying sympathy. I looked at the man's face. I cannot describe it—unless as like the incredulous devotion of a dog who, expecting chastisement, receives the caress of his master's hand. As he touched him the master said, "Very well, then, I *do will* your return to perfect health; from this moment you are cured." And then again my eyes sought the face of the Great Teacher, and what I saw there was an expression of such severity

as to suggest that he was now angry with himself, and it was with extraordinary sternness that he told the healed man to go straight up to one of the great hospitals to get such examination as would indicate that his cure was permanent. And he went on to say (and this he reiterated), that on no account was a word to be said to anyone as to how the cure had come about. But of course the man did tell others. He simply could not keep it to himself, and the result was that our evangelistic mission was practically stopped for the time being, for we were unable to go openly into any town and had really to take refuge among the mountains ; but even in the most inaccessible places people found us.

It is a strange thing to say, but I believe it is the truth that his capacity to heal nearly ruined our evangelistic mission. The problem created was of course not of his making : he could heal both the body and the

soul. The problem was with the people. I never realised before how much we human beings have allowed ourselves to become obsessed with bodily needs. So long as the people felt that he could and perhaps would heal their bodies they would not give a moment's thought to the condition of their souls, and, strange to say, for most of them the cure of the body was not in any way a preliminary to the cure of the soul. Bodily griefs merely gave place to bodily enjoyments. In a word, I came to see that the immediate fear of a healing mission which came to him at the outset at Porth Llanfair was entirely well-founded. He was right and we were wrong. But I did not come to see this easily, and I look back with shame to the many occasions when, by bragging to people about his healing powers, I frustrated all his attempts at gaining privacy.

By now Porth Llanfair, so far as the

difficulties attendant upon publicity were concerned, was no worse than any other place for him and his mission ; and naturally we who were with him wanted to go home and see our own people. So one evening we returned there, arriving after dark. There was no possibility of our preventing people from knowing that he had come back, and early next morning there was a crowd outside the house. The Great Teacher opened the door and, standing before the porch in our tiny little front garden, preached to them and taught them. Later, one or two of the ministers of religion came up. The crowd made way for them and they took their stand with him there behind the railings in our little garden, while he preached. All the time the sick people were gathering on the outskirts of the crowd, but they could not make their way through it to get to him. There was one particularly sad case of a young fellow who was paralysed. He had

succeeded in getting his friends to bring him on a stretcher, for he was past walking. They arrived, however, long after the crowd had collected, and could not possibly push their way through it; so, going up a back street, they brought the poor chap in through our kitchen door, right through the house and out at the front door, and laid down the stretcher just beside the Great Teacher while he was preaching, and near where the ministers were standing. At the time the Great Teacher was speaking, as he so often did, of the necessity of faith—faith in God, faith in His fatherly love, faith in the new realm of righteousness and peace over which the Father God ruled, and which was awaiting the entrance of those who came in penitence for past sin, in longing for forgiveness and in absolute trust in God. While he was speaking, the Master had almost subconsciously taken in what was going on round him, and it was, you might

say, in immediate illustration of his teaching that he suddenly turned round to the paralytic and said to him, "My boy, your sins are forgiven you." It was startling. After what he had been telling the people it implied that he knew what was in this poor paralysed young man's mind, and that without saying a word to him or questioning him in any way, he knew that he had got before him a real penitent and one who was ready to enter into the new relationship with God of which he had been speaking, and the new kind of life which was the fruit of that relationship. I confess I myself was startled by the authority of the utterance. You must remember that the Master was a young layman and not what the world would consider a highly educated one at that, and he was using words that came very strangely from the lips of one in his worldly position. It was the voice of unquestioned religious authority and it was frankly

challenging, requiring no sanction of Church or religious organisation.

I could see that one or two of the clergy and ministers who were there did not like it. I do not know whether it was that they felt they ought at least to have been called into consultation with him as it were, or whether they were jealous of him, or whether they thought he was a fanatic and were doubtful what all this kind of thing was going to lead to. At any rate it was clear that they either were really shocked or pretended to be so. As it turned out, this was obvious not only to us who watched their faces, but also to the Teacher himself, although he had not been watching them. Intuitively he had known what we only found out later, that in reality some of them at any rate had come heresy-hunting and prepared to find fault. Suddenly he turned towards them and asked them what they were worrying about. "This authority of

mine that for some reason you seem to doubt and even to resent comes to me," he said, "apart from theological training and the grace of ordination and the setting apart by the Church; it has nothing to do with office. It is not part of a professional equipment such as the doctor has for his ministry of healing. Gifts of healing both of body and soul are mine, but they came to me by no human mediation. A man who is set apart by God to carry out His purposes is not necessarily tied up to traditional ways and means, nor need he necessarily be chosen from among your own number. It may well be, as in my case, that someone unknown to the Churches, outside their organisation, without their special privileges, with no office or emolument or status, becomes the special vehicle of God's revelation. Which do you think is easier for an uninitiated and unlicensed person like me to perform—the functions

of the priest or the functions of the doctor ? Well, I who am neither the one nor the other can and will exercise the functions of both. I have mediated to this young fellow the cure for the disease of his soul, and I now choose to mediate to him the cure for the disease of his body. Perhaps, seeing the obvious reality of the cure of the body, you will then more readily believe in the reality of the cure of the soul." Then he turned to the young man, and said, " My boy, get up off that stretcher, roll it up, and take it home with you. You have no further use for it." Up the young man got, rolled up the stretcher, slung it under his arm as though it had been a mere nothing, gave a startled look of speechless gratitude in the direction of the Master and strode through the gate; the crowd opened a way, and he walked straight home.

To say that people were amazed is to put it mildly. The incident was, of course, utterly unique in the experience of all of us. The

curious thing is that I could see that many of the crowd, like some of the ministers, were doubtful about the whole thing, and I confess that my friends and I could not help wondering whether there was not something in the fears that these clergy and ministers obviously had. It was rather uncanny. There is a very narrow margin between awe and fear, and authority such as the Teacher had exhibited was for most of us a rather fearsome thing to come in contact with. And fear is the source of so much of the evil of the world; that is why faith is so essential. After that most of the clergy and ministers who were there got up, and soon they and the people drifted away. But one of the ministers remained and attached himself to us. Afterwards whenever we were in Porth Llanfair he was one of our company and he became a great friend of the Master. This incident of the healing of the paralysed young man seemed

over, but there was something about it none the less that made me doubtful about the future.

Later we went down to the jetty, and there the Master spoke in the open air to all and sundry.

It was about this time, so far as I can remember, that, instead of preaching to the regular churchgoers, he began to preach to those who were, as you might say, outside the Churches, and sometimes even outcasts of society. It was now indeed that he added to our small number of immediate followers one who was not only out of touch with the religious activities of our town, but notoriously so. I must say that the rest of us had at the time the gravest doubts as to the wisdom of this action, though close association with the new recruit very soon made us change our minds about this. The Master followed this up, moreover, by openly associating with some of the

more doubtful characters of the town and becoming really intimate with them. Among the church-going folk the thing became rather a scandal, and some of the religious leaders—not only ministers of religion, but also some of the leading laymen and women—spoke to me and the others about it, urging us to bring our influence to bear upon the Master to prevent him behaving in this way. They said that whether he was openly attached to any of the Churches or not, it brought them *all* into disrepute. Now frankly I should, I think, have been disposed to agree with them but for the fact that I had seen the Master in the presence of these doubtful characters. You had only got to see him with them to realise the utter impossibility of their contaminating his blazing purity.

His permanent influence upon some few of them was most remarkable, and the curious thing was that many of these people

loved having him with them and loved to do him honour. What worried me when I came to think about it, was that the very same people who thus loved him, hated so many of the people they called religious folk. They did not desire the company of such and they had no desire to do them honour. Indeed, at first I thought that their attitude towards the Master was what it was because they wanted to spite the Church people who were inclined to look askance at him, but this I found was not wholly so; there were other reasons. They tolerated me and my friends; nay, more, I think they liked us. But it was clear that our passport for entry into their circle of friendship was that we, like they, were real friends of the Master. When we talked to him about these criticisms of his actions and his friendships he replied enigmatically that he was a physician of souls, and that it was diseased souls and not healthy ones upon which he

wanted to exercise his healing gifts. That was about as near sarcasm as he ever reached, because, of course, all of us in church, both ministers and people, are for ever talking of ourselves as miserable sinners. This word of his set me thinking. Were we church-going folk really conscious of our need ? And how could God help us unless we were really so ? And what is the good of going on calling yourself a miserable sinner in your prayers and reiterating it in your hymns if all the time when you think of sin you think of somebody other than yourself doing the sinning ?

And then another thing : many of the social outcasts and non-church-going folk of our town at once recognised the sublimity of the Great Teacher, even if they did not follow him ; whereas so many of the so-called religious folk did not. Yet these so-called religious folk really were in so many ways living better, cleaner and socially

more useful lives than these outcasts whom he befriended, who had cut themselves off from all religious observance, and as far as possible had tried to keep God out of their lives.

It was all very worrying, and it was not made any less so by the criticism we followers of his were ourselves getting in consequence of our attachment to the Great Teacher. My own parish priest took me very seriously to task. Being on this mission with the Great Teacher, I had not been attending the Church services regularly of late. He quite rightly put it down to my relations with the Great Teacher. He said I had become a mere undenominationalist, which I suppose I had, if that was what the Great Teacher was, as my parish priest had seemed to imply; moreover, said he, I was neglecting the means of grace, and so on; but the truth was that the presence of the Great Teacher was a far

more potent means of grace for me than any I had known heretofore, and this was a fact of experience which was for me beyond question. Later I talked the whole thing out with the Master himself, and he was quite clear about it, suggesting to my critic, when at length he got the chance, that so long as I could be with him in his work, other means of grace might conceivably be subsidiary. I might need the splendid old routine of the Churches' worship and life of devotion again later, should his bodily presence be taken from me, which he seemed to imply might well happen in the not far distant future. But this difference of opinion between him and the religious leaders really went deeper. He seemed to think that they were making *means* of grace into *ends* in themselves, and I am bound to say that even then, almost against my will, I felt he was right. It certainly had been so in my church. Our clergyman was ever-

lastingly telling us, if not by actual word, then always by implication, to make our communions more frequently and to make them fasting, and so on. He never seemed to me to worry about the *ends* these communions were meant to serve, and the ends this fasting was meant to serve; the communions and the fastings tended to become a positive fetish. My friends used to tell me that they were faced with the same kind of problem in different forms in other places and communions. Though in their case apparently some other kind of fetish was set up.

Association with the Great Teacher made me feel more and more that the Churches were all of them, in their differing ways, going wrong in matters like this. They were not putting first things first. They were so often putting the emphasis in the wrong place. Here was this new spiritual movement created by the Great

Teacher and here were the Churches trying to put him and us, who were influenced by him, into their own schemes of thought and action and devotion. They wanted to enclose us in their own system, to make us conform to their own traditional usage; and the plain fact was that it could not be done. I began to have the quite horrible experience of feeling that both the Master himself and we who followed him were out of place in the regular church services to which we sometimes went. We felt uncomfortable, and, strange to say he, whose presence brought comfort to the restless souls of so many, made many *inside* the Churches feel supremely uncomfortable when he was present. It was all very difficult to explain. I think the Church had somehow lost that splendid freshness and resilience which existed in the early days of Christianity, and which it partially regained during seasons of revival that had taken place from

WHAT IF HE CAME ?

time to time in the course of its history. Putting the new thought and inspiration which he brought into the normal life and activity of the Churches was, said the Great Teacher, like sewing a brand new bit of cloth on to a moth-eaten coat and expecting it to hold, or like pumping air into a rubber tyre that was all dried up and perished. It could not be done. But, then, why should the Churches be moth-eaten and dried up and perished ?

I tell you these were hard days for me—so much that the Great Teacher did and said seemed to be misunderstood by the religious people. He got into trouble over the way we kept Sunday, and he got into trouble over religious observances and his use of the means of grace. He got into trouble over the company he kept and his disregard of social conventions. He got into trouble over the expressions that he used in his teaching and in respect of

the authority which he assumed. And it was always with the religious people he got into trouble in this way, while all the time those few of us who were his intimates knew him to be the only really religious person we had ever met.

Things came to a head when he deliberately denied the right of tradition to control his practice and that of his followers. This hit almost everyone in some way or other. The more Catholic-minded, of course, were furious but not more so, I think, than the Protestant-minded when the latter discovered that he included in his conception of tradition those that were set up by their ancestors at the times of the Reformation and the Evangelical revival, just as much as those that dated from pre-Reformation times. Sometimes the Master discovered religious people deliberately refusing to do obviously good actions, just because they could not use those magic words "tradition" or

"precedent" about them. It was then that he became really angry. I remember his scorn on one such occasion, when men, resting on tradition and precedent, had doubted the lawfulness of a certain action they knew he was contemplating: "A religious man according to you," he said, "must not do good or save life unless he can first find and cite some tradition upon which he can base his action. What you need to do is to create some new precedents and form some new traditions."

From this time onwards many of the churches and chapels began again to be closed to him, as they had been for other reasons at the outset of his ministry, and it is from this time that I should date the waning of such popularity as he had achieved among church-going folk, though he now became more popular than ever among such of the simpler elements in the population as were out of touch with the

Churches. And there was another fact that emerged at this point in his mission which seemed to me very sinister. The more bigoted and fanatical of his enemies among religious people began secretly to ally themselves with unscrupulous elements in the Press and in public life, in order to think out ways and means whereby the Great Teacher might be silenced.

Naturally the kind of person who had been willing to silence or to condone the silencing of Zecherson was not likely to be backward in helping somebody else in their effort to silence the Great Teacher, provided it could be done circumspectly. Bigotry is never particularly scrupulous about either its allies or its weapons. There were signs that the bright early period of the mission was beginning to come to an end. The clouds were gathering.

This growing hostility of religious people and this dangerous alliance that I have just

mentioned, coupled with the impossibility of his getting serious opportunity to deliver his spiritual message when all that the crowds wanted was healing of the body or the witnessing of such healing, led the Great Teacher now for the most part to leave the towns and go to the villages. He hoped that in this way he would escape the attention of his enemies and at least something of a kind of publicity that was doing his cause great harm. I remember well what a failure our first attempt was. We went to a tiny village a little way up the coast, expecting there, at any rate, to get away from the crowds, but they came from all over the place, just as they had done in the case of Zecherson. For a time it seemed as though the healing ministry with all its attendant difficulties and dangers was destined to start all over again. I remember the crowds positively hemming him in on this occasion, so that in order to teach them

he had to get into a small boat and speak to them from it while the surf (it was fortunately a calm day) was breaking around it. Again and again he begged those whom he healed not to make it known, but all to no effect, and in the end there was nothing for it but to escape to the mountains, and this we did.

Do you know the Arans in Merioneth ? There are still places in the Arans where it is not impossible to find a retreat. We found one there ; and, for some time, only those joined our party whom the master actually sent for. It was then that he selected twelve of us to be his special companions and disciples. And he began to prepare us to undertake the proclamation of his message, extend his work and influence and even eventually to share some of his authority. We were a strange group of men. There was myself (whom, by the way, he nicknamed "Old Rock"), and my

friends James and John, whom he nicknamed "The Thunderers," and then there was my brother Andrew, and Philip, Matthew and Thomas and four other Welshmen, of whom one, whose name was Simon, like mine, was so violent a Welsh nationalist that he refused to speak publicly in the English language (he got over that a bit after he joined our company), and then finally there was one other, who came from over the Border. I am afraid it may have been for that reason that we were rather inclined to leave this one out of things. Nor do I think the rest of us can altogether divest ourselves of responsibility in thus contributing to the disaster which overtook him. I shall speak of him again, for he turned out to be a traitor.

Only once during this time did the Master leave the mountain-side and go into a town, and that was when we visited Pont Aderyn, where he and we had many friends. His



friends did not on this occasion, however, appreciate his coming. Not because they did not as usual rejoice in his presence, but because they feared for him. There was, it appeared, an important religious convention going on there at the time and many religious leaders were there, some of whom were known to be inimical to the Great Teacher.

As a matter of fact, when we got to the house where he had arranged to stay, the crowd began at once to gather. There was little doubt but that his enemies would hear of his presence, so wishing to avoid a scene, his friends gave out that he had had a nervous breakdown and needed complete rest. They then tried to get him to go away, but he would not go. They were so concerned for his welfare, however, that privately they sent over to Cartref, his native town, for his mother and his brothers, to come and try to prevail on him to give up his mission for the time being. His enemies,

of course, did hear he was in the place and at their meetings they publicly attacked him. Whether he was mad (as they implied that his friends believed) or sane, they said they did not know, but they did know that he was certainly bad and that his influence, even on those whose physical and mental illness he cured, was of the Devil.

The Great Teacher asked some of these critics to come and see him, and more out of curiosity than anything else, they came. He tried quite simply to reason with them. I remember some of the words he used. They accused him of deliberate wickedness in the exercise of his powers. But he made them admit—as how could they do otherwise?—the actual good results of his actions, and he pointed out to them quite simply how impossible it was for what was bad to produce the wholly good. “If I was a bad man,” said the Master, “I should want to achieve bad results. You have seen me

drive the Devil out of men. It surely is not the task of a devilish man to drive the devilish instincts out of others." And then he became very grave as he spoke to them of the real character of their sin. Out of sheer malice and jealousy and envy and narrow-mindedness they had called bad what in their heart of hearts they knew to be good. In order to do harm to a good man they had with absolute deliberation tried to make appear evil what they themselves knew was not evil. That kind of action, said the Master, if pursued far enough, must lead to a condition of evil on their part that was simply beyond redemption. If they went on deliberately attributing to the Devil what they really knew to be a work of the Holy Spirit of God they must end by putting themselves outside the pale of redemption. It was not that God could not redeem. It was that for them God's redemption itself became

the Devil's work and the Devil's work was for them God's redemption.

This, however, made his enemies more furiously angry than ever, and their voices were loud in protest. It was just at this time that his mother and his brothers arrived, and of course they, being very simple religious folk, were dreadfully upset at this antagonism of the religious leaders. A message was sent in to the Master to say that they were outside and were asking for him, but he would not immediately leave the place where he was. "If I am to perform my mission," he said, "I must treat anybody who is trying to discover and to do the will of God with the same reverence and esteem as I should treat my mother and my sister and my brother. Faced as so many of my hearers are with this conflict of evidence concerning the good and the beautiful and the true, I must not leave them in the lurch. I must be at their disposal as long as they

need me. Please ask my mother and the others to wait until this discussion is over. I will be with them as soon as possible."

It seemed to me that it was this desire not to leave in the lurch those whom he had already influenced, which determined him now, in spite of the growing antagonism of some of the religious people, once again openly to continue his mission wherever the public would give him a hearing; but there were doubtless other reasons, one of which was certainly his desire to train in *practical* ways those of us who had become his disciples. I have spoken before of his authority as a teacher. I have not said much about his method. Never once did he give us or, so far as I know, any of his hearers a body of doctrine, nor did he lay down any laws for our guidance, nor did he do our thinking for us and give us the

results which we were just calmly and unquestioningly to accept. On the contrary, the method that he most commonly used was selected by him, as he himself once told us, in order to force people to think for themselves and to prevent in them a kind of belief which, being mere credulity, was calculated to lead to a sort of fetishism, an affair of the emotions having little relation to the intellect. He obviously feared the results of the teaching methods of many of the religious leaders of his day. Seldom if ever has a great religious leader been so careful of his teaching method as was he. That is why we called him the Great Teacher. It constantly amazed us how little, on the whole, he whose own devotional life was rooted in the Scriptures appealed to the actual words of Holy Scripture in reinforcement of his teaching. He seemed to be afraid of people relying on the letter rather than the spirit. Still more remarkable was

his absence of reference to what might be described as normal ecclesiastical usage and aid to worship. He did not dispense with such things; on the contrary, he took them more or less for granted and used them for his own ends, much as a man takes his food day by day.

The average man, if his digestion is in order, is not always wondering what new thing he can find to eat. Usually, and as regards the basic part of his food, he eats what other people eat and what centuries of tradition suggest that he should eat. The general diet of ordinary people from age to age changes only very slowly. So it is normally with ecclesiastical usage and aids to worship. The Master seldom or never preached about such things, though they were the subject matter of many of the sermons, addresses, writings and debates of those of his enemies who were religious leaders; and as for the re-

ligious papers of the day, they were just full of problems of ecclesiastical usage and so forth. I can only say that as a subject for debate these things did not seem to interest him. The only side of this question that he ever touched upon was that which related to its inwardness. What mattered for him was its sincerity, and (what seems to me very important) sincerity for him was always a matter of the intellect and will as well as the emotions.

The point I want to emphasise now is that his use of the parabolic method in his teaching was not just casual. It was not something which he used because he was good at telling a story, but a method very deliberately chosen and used in order to prevent people becoming his followers without thought and real understanding of the inwardness of his message. He never aimed at getting large numbers of adherents, let alone disciples. He deliberately tried to

prevent the shallow acceptance on the part of his hearers of ideas they did not comprehend and rules of life the real implications of which they had never attempted to understand.

Take the occasion I have just mentioned, when he taught the people from a boat. The illustrations that he used then, I remember, dealt with the subject of seed-time and harvest. Very appropriate they were for the part of Wales where he was preaching, where so many of the people are with great difficulty farming small areas of land. Illustrations of this kind are, of course, familiar, but their application to religion he did not himself make. He left his hearers to undertake that task for themselves.—The Sower was sowing and the process was somewhat haphazard, and some of the seed fell on the side of a road that crossed the field and the birds got it; and some of it fell on ground

which looked all right but was shallow because there was rock just beneath the surface and, of course, although the seed germinated, it came to nothing. And some of it fell among the thistles which were growing in parts of the ground and which no farmer could be expected entirely to eliminate, for you cannot hand-pick a ploughed field. Well, this seed also germinated, but ultimately it got choked by the thistles. And still other seed fell on deep rich earth, but even it varied greatly in the harvest it gave. You see, harvest depends on so many factors. And having described this scene in some detail he said to his hearers: "Now that is all I am going to say about it. Its meaning you must think out for yourselves. You have heard the story with the physical apparatus of hearing that the good God has given you. I wonder have you also heard it with your mind and heart and soul? That remains to be seen."

As a matter of fact, it was after he had used this parable that he spoke to us of his teaching method in the way I spoke about earlier. At the time we wondered whether it was a good plan preaching like this, the people seemed so mystified, and I cannot say that we disciples were very bright about it. And yet I think that most of them, and we too probably, were merely indolent, and indolence of mind was always sin to the Master. Afterwards he asked us disciples questions to see if we had grasped the inner meaning of the parable. The message of light and life and salvation—the good, the beautiful and the true it was—which like the seed was scattered here and there to all and sundry and in all sorts of ways. So often it was snatched away by the forces of evil before it got a chance even to germinate. Even after germination so often it was prematurely doomed by shallowness of mind or failure to control emotions or

unfavourable environment. Yet some of it did get a chance to grow and ripen and in varying degree to become in its day productive of yet more of the good, the beautiful and the true. We a little demurred at this explanation implying that he was sometimes unnecessarily obscure, and he then referred us to God's way of revelation in the physical world. God means men to discover the truth about the world, He does not deliberately hide it from men in order that they may never make use of it. On the contrary, there is nothing which God desires to prevent men from discovering. Everything is in the end to come to light, but the good thing when it is discovered would be useless and even cease to be good apart from the effort that is made in the attempt at its discovery. He made it plain there was a converse to this also. Nature does not hide her secrets just, so to speak, for the fun of playing a game of

hide and seek with men. Nor must those who have discovered truth hide it or just play about with it for their own private enjoyment. We must let everybody have an opportunity of hearing it. Only we must always make it absolutely clear that hearing is not just a mechanical sort of thing—it is an art which has in everyone to be trained and developed. The Great Teacher seemed to imply that much of the irreligion of our age was due to the fact that, what with the telephone and the wireless and the “talkies” and the rapid means of communication, people were listening to more mere words than ever before, but were hearing far less of the voice of God as it tried to speak to them in all that was beautiful and good and true.

“Be very careful what you hear,” said he. “You have time and opportunity to think about and meditate upon and absorb and use only a very few of the multitudinous

impressions that are bursting in upon your senses. Be selective and be careful as to your selection; select those impressions that bear thinking about and the thought of which will benefit not only yourself but all with whom you come in contact. There are those who go through the world heedless and superficial, frittering away glorious capacities of thought and will and emotion. There are those who make selection from the multitudinous impressions of their environment but make wrong selection and fill their minds with the kind of stuff you see them reproduce in so much of the literature and art of our day. And there are still others whose selection and use of material from their mental and emotional and volitional food are such as to make them increase, in a world which desperately needs such increase, the things which make for righteousness and peace.

"All the time you are forming habits—

habits of superficiality and frivolousness, habits of selfishness and lustfulness and carnal-mindedness, habits of honesty and cleanness and beauty and peace and charity. People who meditate upon the beautiful, the good and the true themselves become beautiful and good and true, and from those who do not meditate on such things there is taken away even the beauty and the truth and the goodness which they have."

Often we talked about the new God-directed life to which he was calling men. He taught us to think of it as an undiscovered country of the soul which was at our doors, so to speak, and where God ruled, not by majestic fiat and all-powerful dominance, but quite simply in the hearts of men; and we wondered why men did not seem to discover it, or perhaps still more why it did not seem to discover itself to men. But

the Master was quite serene and unmoved by this thought. He taught us that its discovery was, in point of fact, taking place all the time; that the growth of its dominion was as imperceptible and as certain as the life and growth of good seed in good earth. There would certainly be a great harvest some day. Its coming would be made up of such little imperceptible things that people would hardly recognise them until some day they saw the results full-grown. When you have seen a great oak tree in the forest with the birds nesting in it, you have not thought of the acorn, which, many many years before, dropping down there unnoticed, and escaping even the voracity of the swine, germinated and grew in silence into that great tree. So it was with the development of that at present almost unoccupied territory of the soul which he called the Realm of God.

Thus it was he spoke to such as would

listen, and thus he taught those who were teachable. In his actual teaching he dispensed with rules and regulations and catechisms and creeds and commandments. Not that he attacked them or in any way minimised such use as they might have; on the contrary, he sometimes seemed to take for granted that men would know and use such things, and occasionally he referred to them. I am only telling you what was the fact, namely, that in his actual teaching he made hardly any use of them and by implication he suggested that in our preaching of his message we should do likewise, because you must remember that in all this he was quite deliberately training us for that task.

In private he expounded to us the meaning of the figures that he used in a way that he did not do to the general public. Always he was asking us questions and making certain that we were getting at the

inwardness of his teaching. All the time he was training us. I dare say that in the case of many of the things I have subsequently taught in the course of my long life, I could not refer you back to any definite saying of the Master. I am sure he meant that this should be so. As I have pointed out, he did not teach us a body of doctrine. He taught us how to think the thoughts of God after him, and he gave us the example of his own teaching as the criterion by which we could judge of the validity and effectiveness of our own, and he gave us his own life as the ideal of all our living. Talking of these things brings back to my mind something that happened on the very day he spoke his message from the boat. After he had finished and as he was wishing to get away from the people with as little fuss as possible, he asked some of us to row him across the rather shallow estuary to its other side. The rest of our party were in other

boats. I remember well how hot and thundery it was. When we were about half way across a great thunder cloud beat up from the sea and with it a wind which in a moment lashed the surface of the shallow water, making of it a seething mass almost like water on the boil. I can assure you it was no joke at all; the water was breaking over the sides of the boat and we were in imminent danger of capsizing. The Master, who must have been very tired, though he had not shown it before, had in the meantime gone off to sleep, and even when the storm burst he continued to sleep peacefully like a little child. For a moment we felt quite angry at his sleeping away there while we were fighting to keep the boat afloat. We woke him up and peevishly said, "Don't you care whether we are all drowned or not?" but almost as we said the words we found ourselves simply submerged in his peace. I have not the

slightest idea what really happened, but I do know that from that moment for us on that sheet of water there was a stillness which positively enveloped us and a sense of unfathomable peace. "Why are you so frightened?" he said. "Have you not even yet learned to trust? Do you really think God is going to let His will in regard to our life and work be controlled by His own winds and waves? Do you really think the forces of nature can flaunt God?" To say we were awed is to put it mildly. It seemed to us, indeed, as though he himself had in his own person taken command of wind and wave, and we were still thinking like this when we reached the other side of the estuary and disembarked.

We were now in a very wild bit of country where we had never been before, and almost immediately we had rather a nasty experience, for our unexpected arrival in grounds that we subsequently discovered were private

disturbed a poor demented fellow who had religious mania, and who, with a couple of male attendants, was living there. He was really an inmate of a private asylum, the authorities of which kept this place by the sea, in order to give a change of air and surroundings to such of their patients as it seemed might benefit thereby.

I have tried before to give you some idea of the Master's authority and of the sense of peace as well as of power that seemed to emanate from him. We had just felt this overwhelmingly in the storm, and we were now almost immediately to have another exhibition of it. For when the poor demented man, who upon our sudden arrival had become maniacal, caught sight of the Master, the mania simply fell off him. It was just like a man who is acting another character suddenly becoming his real self again. In a few minutes, to the vast astonishment of his guardians, he was sitting

at the Master's feet as sane as any of us. Unfortunately, before this had happened, the sound of the poor fellow's raving when he first caught sight of us had terrified a litter of pigs that was just on the other side of the fence, and they dashed down the cliff, and, unable to stay their rush, fell over into the sea, and we were quite unable to save them. Everybody was fearfully upset, and as we clearly were not wanted in this place it seemed better to go back again. The poor fellow who had been the cause of all the trouble was now to all appearance absolutely sane and longed at once to attach himself to the Master, but, of course, that was impossible. If he was really cured, as seemed to be the case, all sorts of formalities would have to be gone into before he could be free. The Master himself and the attendants too pointed out to him that it was his business now to show all with whom he came in contact that he had regained his

mental health ; and agreeing that this was the right thing to do, very wistfully he took farewell of us and we went back across the estuary.

I think that of all the days of my association with the Master I can remember, this was most full of incident. As soon as our boats were seen returning again the crowd began once more to gather, and the Master had hardly stepped on shore before he was confronted by one of the religious leaders of the place, who begged him to do what he could for his little daughter, who, he said, was dying. The Master immediately went off with him, but actually on the way he cured a poor sick woman. She had been chronically ill for years and had indeed spent the greater part of the previous twelve years and most of her money undergoing one expensive treatment after another, and at the end of it all was worse rather than better. Some-

how or other, weak though she was, she pushed her way through the crowd until she got near enough to touch him. Her faith was such that to touch him seemed to her sufficient. That faith of hers cured her. I doubt if we should have known anything about it had not the Master felt her presence and realised at once what had happened. He told her that it was her complete faith that had brought about her cure, and he gave her his blessing and she departed. At this moment someone came along and said that it was no use going any further; it was too late, the child was dead. The Master, however, did not take the slightest notice and told the child's father not to fear, but instead to continue trusting, and they went on. He made the crowd disperse, pointing out how harmful the noise they made was for a child who was ill, and then he and the father went on into the house. James and John and me he allowed to stay

with him. For some reason or other he seemed to want us to do so, it was not mere curiosity on our part.

The home was in terrible trouble. People were weeping uncontrollably, and when he told them that the child was not dead but only sleeping some of them became quite hysterical. But he calmed them, and taking the mother and father and us with him he went into the room where the child lay to all appearance dead, and lifted her as though to draw her out from the gates of death. She sat up and got out of bed, and actually walked straight over to her mother. I thought the poor woman was going to collapse with the joy and relief and amazement of it all, but the Master turned from the child, for the person most in need of help in that room then was the mother, and put his hand on the poor woman's shoulder and said, "Now give the child something to eat," and that pulled her together. He

ordered the father and the rest not to tell anybody what had happened. I do not know whether or not they obeyed him in this; I doubt it, but perhaps you can guess that after all that had taken place we had in any case to get away as soon as we could, just as on a previous occasion we had had to leave Porth Llanfair.

This time the Master went straight back to his native place and we went with him. It was some time since he had been to Cartref; indeed, I do not think he had been there at all since the time when he had settled up his affairs there previous to his embarking on his mission. We were surprised that he had not been there before and imagined that for some reason or other he feared that his mother's devotion might be an unsettling influence, for it could hardly be otherwise than that she and his brothers and sisters would urge him to stay at home with them. This may have influenced him, but I do not

think it did greatly. It was something other than this. I think he felt that his home town would somehow prejudge him and his mission and fail altogether to use the spiritual opportunity that his presence would afford it. When a man has lived thirty years in a place he gets for it a sort of affection which makes him sensitive as to its reputation. Then, too, his understanding of the devious ways of men's minds made him feel that it really was difficult for the people of Cartref, who had seen him doing the ordinary work of an ordinary artisan, to credit him with any powers other than those associated with the normal equipment of men more or less in his position. I do not think he wanted to put them to the test. You see, it was not as though he was a recognised popular religious leader. If he had been that, of course, his native place would have acclaimed him. They are good at that kind of thing in Wales. But he was

far from being that : he was, indeed, rather a doubtful sort of character. Very many religious people were, to say the least, uncertain about him. He had a large following, but not among the people who in religious circles mattered. He was said to have extraordinary healing powers, indeed there seemed little doubt about his possession of such ; but even in respect of these there was something queer and uncanny.

Well, as I say, I think he had expected a doubtful welcome, but not quite as bad as he got. He was able to preach on the Sunday and his fellow citizens were astounded by his eloquence, but they seemed to be more shocked by it than helped by it ; as though one whose family connections they knew, somehow ought not to be a person of this sort. Anyhow they could not bring themselves to believe in him. That meant that he could not help them,

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because he never could heal the bodies or the souls of people who did not trust him.

After this he began again a sort of village mission, going to the little places among the hills, chiefly, I think, because he wanted to start us followers of his on definite mission work of our own, for it was at this time that he summoned us all to him and began to send us out into the villages, always two of us together. Before we went he gave us instructions as to the conduct of our mission. We were to speak and act, not apologetically, but as though we had, what indeed we had, a real authority which came from God himself to cast out all that was evil and unclean. Our sole equipment was to be the clothes we stood up in, a ruck-sack on our backs, and a walking stick in our hands. We were to take with us no money,

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no food and no books, and we were not to beg. We were just to trust that God would move people's hearts to give us any necessary hospitality. If they did not want us, that was their look out, and we were to make it quite clear that we had no desire to stay and give our message to those who did not want to hear it. We were not to force ourselves on anyone, nor, where a welcome was assured, were we to pick and choose our hospitality, but to accept the first that was offered and stick to it as long as it was available and was needed.

These rules, I think, sound more rigid and ascetic than they really were, for to men as hard and vigorous as we were there were very few places from which, at a pinch, we could not get home in a few hours if we wanted to. You must remember that we were working in a very restricted area, and most, though not all, of us were used to a hard, open-air life. The mission, I

think, was a distinct success. We preached repentance and we saw real repentance. We witnessed again and again the victorious operation of the power of God against the evil that was in the world, and we were not altogether without success in such healing ministry as we attempted. But the fact that now upon the countryside a band of men, who were definitely disciples of the Great Teacher, were enlarging the scope of his work, made quite important people begin to take more notice.

I told you how, before the Great Teacher commenced his ministry, Zecherson had been silenced. By now he had died as a direct result of the injuries that he had received. And some of those who had been responsible for the attacks upon him were rather worried by all that they heard about the blazing purity and utter fearlessness of this new teacher. Some of them said that he was another and a greater Zecherson ; others, that

he was a man of very different type, much more akin to the ordinary religious reformer of the past and less to be feared than another person of the type of Zecherson. One of these who had been drawn into the anti-Zecherson movement, and had, indeed, become its chief leader, almost against his will, began to have rather worrying twinges of conscience. In some ways this man was a pathetic figure. He had been really rather attracted to Zecherson, but the movement that Zecherson had created had imperilled large financial interests of his, and particularly had brought into the open certain happenings in his private life which he and others were anxious to keep in the dark. So pressure was brought to bear upon him (very little was needed in the case of a sensual weakling such as he was), with the result that it was he who in the end really let loose the forces that brought that great prophet's work to a close. Also he was,

in spite of his position in the community, a curiously ignorant and superstitious man, and it is not too much to say that he was positively scared by all that he heard of the Great Teacher. What effect this had on events which subsequently took place I do not know, but I imagine it was considerable, so I mention it at this point.

But to return to my story. We disciples felt that we were real missionaries now, and it was as such that we returned to the Great Teacher after our mission tour was over and told him of our doings and of our preaching and teaching. To tell you the truth we were not a little proud of ourselves and on the whole fairly satisfied with our reception—you must remember that we had only gone to the villages, not to the towns, and the kind of reception that we asked for was, after all, a very small affair. We had never been used to anything great in the way of receptions; we had not got big ideas.

But we were all rather hungry and tired, and he suggested that we should get away to a quiet place for refreshment and rest, for really in Porth Llanfair we had not had time even to eat. As the tide was high we went by boat up the estuary to a secluded place we knew of. But the people saw us going; whether they feared we were leaving for several days on another mission or not I do not know; but they guessed where we were going that evening, and travelling by a quicker means of transport than we had at our disposal in our boats, they were there before us. Frankly I was very upset about this. I myself was tired and hungry and I knew that the Master and the others were too. But however much the Master might try to escape the people, when he was actually in their presence it was only their need, never his own of which he thought. "They are like sheep," he said—"sheep on the mountains

with no shepherd to care for them." So he at once began to care for them and teach them many things. It was an enormous crowd and the day was nearly over. Neither they nor we had had any food. I doubt if we disciples would have thought of their need had we not been so hungry ourselves. At last we decided to break into the Master's talk and to urge him to send them away to get food. This we did. Whereupon, turning round to us, quite abruptly he said, "You give them food." That seemed, as you might say, almost adding insult to injury—there were we who had not had even a decent breakfast that morning, and not a bite of food since, and no certainty even now where and when we were to get any, told to feed this great crowd of people. It seemed to us for a moment a rather poor kind of joke, and then, looking into his face, we saw that it was not a joke at all. He

was in earnest and we were really to do it.

The member of our company who controlled our finances, such as they were, said that he only had seven or eight pounds on him, and even if we could buy food with that near at hand it would not go round. "What food have you got?" said the Master; "go and find out." Well, we succeeded in collecting a certain amount of passable food of one sort and another. At a pinch, it might just have met our own personal needs. Then he told us to get the people to sit down in an orderly way so that we could get to each of them individually and leave none out. When we had done this, he took that food and looked up to heaven and blessed it, then he divided it up and gave the pieces to us to give to the people.

Never have I taken food which strengthened me and satisfied me as did that. All my adult life I have made my Communions

regularly, but my memory is always of this one and of one other, of which I will speak later. Some people would say, I suppose, that it was not a valid Sacrament, for whatever view they might take of the elements and of the Great Teacher's consecration of them, we disciples who gave to those who received were just plain laymen then, whatever we may have become later. But certainly no one who experienced what took place then would ever think of asking whether that sacrament was valid or not. In any case, what is validity? That food which the Great Teacher had blessed was certainly sacramental. The inward and spiritual grace which it brought to each recipient was something which for the time being simply did away with the need of other food and the desire for it. Everyone was completely satisfied. That food was sacred. That is why, I suppose, we were ordered to take great care that no crumbs should be

lost and that all should be reverently disposed of. That was the largest Communion Service I was ever at.

There are those still for whom the miraculous is something which must be spectacular and its greatness is in direct ratio to its evident abnormality. Exhibition of divine power for them must always be something in the nature of a leap from a temple pinnacle and the immediate appearance of a host of guardian angels. I must not judge others, but for me, one of the greatest exhibitions of divine intervention in the ordinary life of man was that gift of spiritual food to those thousands of souls.

When it was over, the crowd gradually dispersed, and as it was getting late the Master urged us disciples to get into the boat at once and go on ahead of him to a little place we knew of on the other side of the estuary. It was clear that we should have to go immediately if we were to get to

our destination that night, as the tide was going out and it was a long way round by land. Moreover, we had the boats with us and could not leave them just lying about. How he himself purposed to get to us later he did not make clear; we supposed he intended to come the long way round by land. In the meantime, as we were making what speed we could by sea, he was on the mountain-side praying. We had a thoroughly bad time of it; in fact, largely through our own stupidity we messed it up pretty badly. We lost the tide and hung about for hours in consequence, and even after the tide had turned we did not make the place for which we set out, as the wind was against us and there was a big race of water to contend with; in fact, though we did not know it at the time, we were driven back almost to the place from which we started. It was then that we saw somebody moving, as it were, on the water towards us. It was at that darkest hour

which comes before the dawn, and the sky was overcast.

The walking figure passed us by, moving for all the world as I imagined a ghost would move. We cried out to it. It was very weird and we were all rather scared; and then it spoke. It was the Master without a doubt. It was his voice; we would have known it anywhere. "Cheer up," he cried. "Don't be afraid. It is I." And he came to the boat and guided it into a channel out of the wind, or maybe his very presence made us forget the wind, I do not know which. Here was another amazing experience of his intuition of our need, and his capacity to meet it. He had that very evening wonderfully fed us and with us a great multitude of others, and here were we still doubting him when he came to guide us and lead us out of new difficulties. What he meant these illustrations of his care and powerful aid to teach us was, I suppose, the capacity of God to

meet all man's legitimate needs. At the time, I imagine, they seemed to us to be sheer wonder-working and did little more than make us excited. We were still, I fear, not very different from the crowd that ceaselessly surrounded him, and which for the most part was only there in order to see what he would do next.

Later we got the boat to land and the people clambered about him again. It was in the few weeks after this incident that, so far as the masses were concerned, his popularity, I think, reached its greatest height. How he stood the strain of those days I really cannot imagine, for he was never allowed any respite from his work of healing or of teaching; but this was not to last. Quite apart from the controversies which now began to bring this time of comparative popularity to an end, I doubt if it could have lasted. But anyhow we had no opportunity of seeing the results of a long

continuation of such a mission. For now important people in London and in the great cities of South Wales and England and Scotland began to take a rather sinister interest in our doings in North Wales. Many of them were frankly critical of us, but so far as I could understand it their criticism did not amount to much more than that we were unconventional. It is extraordinary how passionately people dislike innovation.

But there was one group of these critics who seemed to the Master a particularly dangerous group. You may remember that in those days in the religious life of England the Churches were themselves divided up into various societies and fellowships and party organisations of one sort and another—apparently the Christian Ecclesia itself was not sufficiently either a society or a fellowship. Everybody who had some particular axe to grind or some particular piece of truth or error

which appealed to him, gathered to himself other like spirits and formed one of these groups or joined a group already formed. Some of these societies doubtless did much good, many of them did much harm, and in course of time their numbers became so large that the whole society movement became a real menace to church life in general. Some of these little groups were more destructive of fellowship than others, and among the more destructive and influential were some which sought to hamper any development of religious life and thought by insistence upon adherence to traditions of one sort and another.

I would not have you imagine these societies were all of one school of thought. They were, however, all alike in this, that they desired to prevent any innovation which could not be referred back to some tradition or other which their members particularly cherished. The Master said that there was

danger of such people honouring God with their lips and not with their hearts, substituting man-made rules for God's Commandments. He gave examples of how some people set "religious" rules above clear moral demands. For instance, in family relationships, filial piety was sometimes made to give way to a supposed religious demand, when it was itself a primary religious demand. And how often in an outwardly religious home all the little homely virtues were swallowed up in a false kind of religious zeal. But most of all with these people he denounced the almost wilful breaking-up of the fellowship of the Church in the interests of some religious conviction which they held, a conviction which, even if it were a true one, was not in its importance on the same plane as the Christian law of love.

On one occasion after he had been dealing with people of this kind, criticising their

endless laws and taboos, he turned round to the crowd and spoke about this matter. God's gifts, he said, can never do men harm; it is man's use of God's gifts that so often is harmful, and later, when we questioned him further about this, he drew an illustration from the human body, saying that it was usually only that which was taken into the human body and actually assimilated by it that was capable seriously of harming it, or for that matter of doing it much good. His complaint about so many of the religious leaders was that they were talking about things that in themselves did not really matter, and the worst of it was that they led people to think that the Christian Faith really laid down that these trivialities were of the essence of the Churches' religion. Fasting and ritual, ornament, deportment and ceremonial, or the lack of them, were *in themselves* of no moment whatever. It was their inner effect upon individuals that

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mattered; if they did good, use them; if harm, get rid of them, and remember that one man's food may be another man's poison. But in any case did anyone really believe that any of these things was of the slightest importance in comparison with the ordinary religious duties of doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with God? These surely were the things that mattered, yet in our churches to-day, and still more in our Church Press, it would appear that doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with God mattered nothing in comparison with the apparently vital question as to whether we should or should not fast before Communion or tolerate the reservation for sick persons of the Blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This kind of thing, said the Great Teacher, is religious play-acting. Let us have first things first. What matters is the condition

of the heart—the condition of the thought life. Your problem to-day, said he, is not one of prayer-book revision or of rival methods of church government. It is now, as it always has been and always will be, the control of evil thoughts which is your problem. Everything bad and good has its roots in the thought life, and it is seriously harmful to make people spend their lives worrying about things which compared with the control of their thought life are the veriest trivialities.

By this time antagonism to the Great Teacher and his teaching had begun seriously to grow, and it seemed to him wise to make more strenuous efforts than ever to get away from the crowd and to spend the time quietly somewhere or other with us. In particular, the more secular elements in the life of the nation were more openly opposing

us now, and as I have told you, there were signs that our religious and secular antagonists were joining forces. Of course, all this criticism in influential circles was increased by each fresh exhibition of popularity among the masses. More than ever now was his healing ministry a positive barrier to the attainment of what the Great Teacher wanted, namely, privacy and freedom to develop his ministry along lines which he knew would be most productive.

It was at this time that we attempted to escape the crowds by going over to Ireland. The attempt was not altogether a failure, but it was not as successful as it might have been. It was during this journey that an incident occurred which set me thinking about racial problems in a new way. Looking back, I can see how one of the Master's greatest difficulties was our bragging about him and his powers. We did this not so much to glorify him as to glorify ourselves. All

that we succeeded in doing was to embarrass him still further, and while he was seeking privacy, effectually to prevent him gaining it.

It was on the boat going over that we got into touch with some foreign people. They were Parsees from Bombay. (What an extraordinary race of people they are! When you come to think of it they play in the commercial life of the East to-day, much the same part as the Phœnicians did in the Mediterranean world of ancient times.) We bragged to them about the Great Teacher and his powers. At the back of our minds, I fear, was the desire to emphasise how greatly inferior was their religion to ours.

For myself, at any rate, I must admit that, without really knowing it, I was obsessed with racialism. These people were to me inferior people, and I all but told them so openly. Well, the upshot of it all was that one of them—a woman—came to the Master and begged him to cure her little girl

who was mentally afflicted. There is one thing, at any rate, that breaks through any barrier set by racialism, and that is mother-love. She was almost apologetic in asking him, and there was something in her manner which indicated to him that she was a little resentful of the attitude in us which seemed to make her apologetic attitude necessary. "So it is a question, is it," said the Master, "not as to whether I can be prevailed upon to exercise my healing ministry at all, but as to whether I shall be prepared to do so upon a poor little Parsee girl? That is the question, at the back of your mind, is it? These disciples of mine imagine, I suppose, that my gifts are a monopoly for their own race, and that to share them with races which they look upon as inferior is rather scandalous, or at any rate rather a waste of time. Well, what do you think about this attitude of theirs?"

The woman answered in a sentence of

such biting irony as I never heard before or since and am not likely ever to forget. "Children," she said, "are allowed to give their pet dogs scraps of food, so I dare say these childish disciples of yours will not mind us Parsees having their leavings, so long as they can think of us as pet dogs. What matters for me, however, is what matters for the pet dog. I want the food, if food there is to be had."

The Master, so far from being offended at her bitter reply, seemed to think it a fitting one, and so it was. We had deserved every word of it and he evidently intended that we should learn a lesson from it. The child was healed.

After this, still seeking privacy, we took a long roundabout journey back to North Wales, travelling through much of Ireland. It was then at last that the Master got the

opportunity he had longed for of spending time in teaching us. Of course, the healing mission still went on; we could not get quite away from it. I remember that it was about this time that he treated a deaf and dumb man, for instance, and effected a remarkable cure.

Returning at length, however, to our old haunts in North Wales, we soon found ourselves once again the centre of much criticism. It was, it is true, a different kind of criticism to which we were now subjected; and it came from a different set of people. It was not so much from the religious people as from certain others who were interested in social and political reform. What these criticisms came to, as far as I could make out, was that the Master's teaching was, as they said, "in the air." What they wanted was something practical and revolutionary in the way of reform: some sign that the Master really meant business

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instead of all this incessant emphasis on the things of the spirit. Why did he not get down to earth a bit and make things happen ? What was wanted was forcefulness and practical mundane activity.

These people profoundly depressed the Master. They were sincere in their desire for reform, but were completely oblivious to the fact that no reform was possible apart from some change in the mind and heart and spirit of men. For them what mattered was immediate active intervention. For the Master what mattered first was right ideals ; and most of all a right relationship to God. Granted that men were dominated by right ideals and had channels open between themselves and God along which the power of God could flow into their lives, the Master seemed to think that right action could, so to speak, be allowed to take care of itself. He hated to do it, I think, but he felt compelled to pour

cold water on much of the social and political enthusiasm of these people. He told them plainly that they were not going to achieve very much worth achieving the way they were going about it. I am afraid the only effect of this was to make them more than ever convinced that he was a mere visionary. Eventually he left them. There seemed no hope of convincing them.

And now, again travelling by boat, we crossed over to the other side of the great bay in which Porth Llanfair was situated. It took us most of the day to do it. I do not think we disciples had realised that instead of just crossing the estuary, he was going right across the bay this time. Unfortunately we forgot to take sufficient food with us. We had only a single loaf of bread in the boat. Of course we started grumbling about it. Some of us were for going back and getting a better supply of food, and others were for putting up with it

and pushing on as rapidly as possible. To hear us you would think we had not had food for weeks and were starving men at the last gasp. The Master then took our precious loaf of bread in his hands and began to use it as a sort of text for a soliloquy.

“Yeasty stuff this propaganda of those who are arrayed against us. It is fast influencing men’s minds throughout the country. It is clever propaganda and its authors are, often quite without realising it, using every kind of subtle influence to turn men’s minds against us. The fact that they are often not in the least conscious that they are doing it makes it so much more dangerous. Public opinion is being fed with poisonous stuff. The Press spreads poison, without knowing it, in all sorts of clever ways. The religious leaders do it in other ways. The politicians and the social reformers do likewise. The novelists and the pamphleteers

and those who provide recreation for the people do the same. Even the school teachers, who are as a group more careful than most, are in their class teaching too feeding the children with this yeasty dangerous antagonism towards the only thing that can save humanity. You hear the same thing in the clubs, both those of the rich and those of the poor. And all this incessant propaganda is acting like leaven, leavening the whole community with a secular view of life that leaves God out." —Then he turned to us. Full well he knew that we too, God forgive us, were not uninfluenced by all this propaganda. "Be careful," he said, "that you are not ruined by it too. Do you believe the things I have taught you about faith in God? Do you *really* believe them? Have you faith in God and in His realm or are you too in your thought reverting to a legalism that cannot save, or a ceaseless

activity that never reaches to the roots of any serious problem in the human soul ? ”

We thought, as a matter of fact, that he was criticising us because we had complained about the poor supply of food we had, and in a way, I suppose, he was ; for suddenly he said, “ Why are you making all this fuss about a little shortage of food ? Do you not yet realise how unimportant it is ? You have seen all that has happened while you have been with me. You have heard day by day what I have taught you, but you have not yet grasped what things are of importance and what things are not. Have you ever really been in need of food while you have been my disciples ? Yes, you have ! And then did I not satisfy you with a bounty you surely can never forget ? You have not forgotten it, you say ! but the thought that leaves God out is so sedulously propagated in the world of our day that

you are in danger of leaving Him out. This propaganda even influences men like you in spite of all you have seen and heard. Beware, especially, two things. One is religious unreality—mere play-acting, in which the individual talks of a relationship between the soul and God which he does not really possess. The other is a worldly activity which deliberately leaves God out. These two things between them are ruining the world of to-day, and the heaven of each of these is already working in your lives."

By this time we were near the shore on the other side of the bay. We landed at a small fishing village. The Master intended to leave it as quickly as possible and to press on into the interior, for this time he was determined somehow or other to get right away from the crowds so that he might be alone with us. Indeed, it turned out that he had made very special preparations to

this end. But before we had time to leave the village an incident occurred which might well have made of no avail even the careful preparations for the attainment of privacy which had been made.

It was the same old problem. This time it was a blind man whom the people brought to him. I never solved the problem why the Master healed some people and did not heal others. I do not think he healed anybody merely for the sake of a purely physical healing. I do not think he ever thought of the physical apart from the spiritual. It was the whole personality which he always strove to heal. I know he never healed anybody as a mere demonstration of supernatural power, for he looked upon that as a temptation of the devil.

Have you ever considered one of the most extraordinary aspects of the failure of the Church all down its history to understand Jesus Christ? He looked upon any

attempt to influence people's minds by the exhibition of the miraculous as a prime temptation of the devil. Yet the Church has pictured Him ever since as One who, so to speak, continually would cast Himself down from some temple pinnacle in order that His miraculous powers might be manifested, and so prove His Divinity.

I can only suppose that, on each occasion on which the Great Teacher used his healing gifts, he dealt with the individual on his own merits, and that circumstances which we can sometimes guess at, but can seldom do more than guess at, influenced him in each case. He healed this blind man, but not at once, and not in the village. Instead, he took him with us, leaving the village and the villagers behind, and he made the healing take a considerable time. He clearly wanted to get the man right away from the village so as to avoid any publicity whatever, and when at last, under the Master's

treatment, the full sight was restored he made the man promise to go straight home and not go through the village on his way there. And on this very rare occasion this healed man, I suppose, did as he was told, for we were left to ourselves, and the next several days we wandered about practically unmolested among the tiny villages of a part of Wales which at this time of the year was as far removed from the life of the outside world as is any part of Britain.

As we wandered about from place to place, he taught us and asked us questions. It was then, for the first time, that he seemed interested in people's opinions of him. He asked us what those with whom we came in contact really thought about him. For the most part he knew quite well; the nature of their antagonism revealed that clearly enough, and still more did men's indifference. For although great crowds incessantly followed him, they were as nothing to the

multitudes who ignored him. We disciples, I fear, cared little for these masses of the people, who were outside his influence. We were content with the crowds he already attracted, and we were glad to tell him what we had overheard some of them saying. Some people we told him looked upon him as another Zecherson, others thought of him as a modern version of a sort of Old Testament prophet like Elijah or perhaps one of the other rather less politically-minded ones. And then he asked us who *we* thought he was. Then it was there came my great moment of revelation. It burst on me like a flash—Jesus the Christ had come to earth again AND THIS WAS HE.

You ask me what I did when this tremendous fact came home to me. It is hard for me to tell you. It was one of the most humiliating episodes in my life. The moment I had

made this declaration he began to speak to us of the future in an entirely new way. He told us that much the same things were going to happen as happened once before in history when God in human flesh came unto His own and His own received Him not. That, said he, was what happened when the Christ came to the old Israel of God, that is what is happening now that he comes again to the new Israel of God—his Church. Again it will be a story of suffering and rejection and death, and again he will not be holden of death. He will arise. The Christ is indestructible. He spoke with the greatest certainty about it.

Then it was that I had my humiliating experience, and I deserved it every bit. I do not want to try to excuse myself. I never had really grasped the fact that the Christ never would use his supernatural powers for his own ends. All through its history, as I have said, the Church has been

speaking of him as though he did and would. I was no worse than the others, except that I must needs go and talk heedlessly about things I had never understood and never seriously thought about. But I want to repeat that the Church has been constantly making my mistake all down the centuries. Most people still, as I did then, think of Jesus Christ as a sort of wonder-worker proving his Divinity by his wonder-working; when as a matter of fact, he told mankind as clearly as it ever could be told that such wonder-working to prove Divinity was of all temptations the one which God incarnate must withstand. But then try and understand the emotional reaction that led me on to my blundering interruption. Think of the tremendous fact that had just swept over me. This was Jesus the Christ, the Risen Ascended Lord come back again to judge the world. Suffer! Why should he permit his own suffering? Rejection! Why

should he not smash opposition? Death! The thing is unthinkable. Resurrection! Why, he is risen, and it is in his risen power he is among us. I was walking alone with him at the time, but he waited until the others came up before he told me what he thought of me. He knew the others thought much as I did and ought therefore in some measure to be associated with me in my condemnation.

"Rockwell," he said, "I have been through this kind of thing once before. It was in the Black Mountains just before I began my ministry. It was the devil tempting me then, and it is the devil tempting me now. The devil in you, Rockwell. Leave me! Your thoughts are still the thoughts of unregenerate man. Even now God has gained no real hold upon you. You are carnal, not spiritual."

Even then I did not really understand him. All I knew was that somehow I had

failed him. I, who but a moment ago was in the seventh heaven because it had been given to me to recognise him for what he was, was now in the deepest hell of self-condemnation, because the spiritual illumination which had enabled me to *recognise* him was not sufficient to make me *understand* him and his mission.

From this time onwards we noticed a subtle change in the Master. Indeed how could it be otherwise now that we knew his secret ?

It was as though he were making a last attempt to win men to his side. I felt a change also in his attitude to us. Instead of avoiding the crowd, he now invited people to come and listen to him. He had us with him on such occasions, not, as it seemed to me, as specially privileged listeners who were being trained to assist

him later on, but as actual partners with him in an enterprise which was, so to speak, in full swing. And now openly he called for volunteers to follow him and submit to his leadership—yet how rigorous were the demands he made on those who should contemplate submission to that leadership! Complete selflessness—not just occasional acts of self-denial. It was their whole self he was asking of them. Following with him to degradation and death if God so willed, for such a death for the body might quite well be the price of life for the soul. Self-seeking was the surest way to the death of the soul. The casting out of self in pursuit of his aims and in the spreading of his good news about God and his kingdom—this was to achieve life and to fulfil one's real destiny. Here were men everywhere slaving to gain riches and prestige and power and pleasure; straining every nerve to get yet more of this world's goods and

this world's gifts. And when they got these things, what use were they? His followers must renounce the world, not as the ascetic did, but as he had done. They must dominate the world, not let the world dominate them. World-domination was an activity of the spirit. And then he made the most tremendous claim that men would be judged—indeed were now being judged—by their attitude to himself.

In his expression of this claim he cut deep down and exposed the source of so much of our failure.

We were ashamed of him, he said. We demurred—ashamed of the most priceless, the most altogether lovely person the world had ever seen. Yes, ashamed of him. We were cowards, that was it. I was a coward. Yes, and so I was, God forgive me. I won't deny it; you shall hear more of my cowardice yet as I go on with my story. So much had we all been influenced by the secularity of

the age in which we lived that almost unconsciously we submitted ourselves to its judgments and allowed ourselves to judge ourselves by its standards. You see in the eyes of the world the Great Teacher was either "a religious" or "a fanatic" or "a pious fraud," or "a simpleton," at any rate "a back number"—all his followers were tarred with one or other of those brushes, and we did not like it.

Forgive me putting it so brutally, but it is true. Men were ashamed of him and of his words. In the midst of our modern secular civilisation, to be an associate of such an one as he and in ordinary conversation to use words such as he used, singled a man out, marked him off in the eyes of the world as a peculiar and even a slightly unpleasant being. It more or less barred him from the normal groups and divisions of human society in the modern world. And men would not pay this price. Half the time

we would not and did not pay that price. I did not pay that price—you demur at that—you wait till you have heard my story.

“Well,” said the Master, “you must face up to it. Either the world is going to be ashamed of you or I am. You must choose. Only in choosing remember this,”—and here openly he made this positively stupendous claim. “My judgment is ‘the last judgment.’ It is the judgment of Heaven itself.”

It was on this occasion that he made a prophecy in regard to myself and those who started with me this work out here in the mission-field. Naturally I had no inkling of its significance at the time. I have often thought of it since. Speaking to the crowd and pointing to us followers of his he said : “The Realm of God of which I so often speak seems to some of you very far off. But there are some of my followers here who

before they die are going to see it come with power." To think that after all my wilfulness and failure he should let me see it come as he has—the Kingdom of God—coming in power, that *is* what we are seeing out here—to think that I have lived to see that !

I have told you of the subtle change that came over the Master's relations with us, and especially I think over his relations with John and James and me after we had realised who he really was. This change was most apparent in his desire that we should share in his more intimate religious life; and about a week after the events I have narrated above it was exemplified by an extraordinary experience we had in his presence while at prayer. He had taken us three with him away from the others and from the crowd and had led the way up a certain mountain that was near-by. I

remember thinking at the time what an ideal place it was for solitude. It was quite an easy climb when you knew the way, but if you did not know that one way there was no other possible way up. At the top a curious formation in the rock had made a natural shelter from the wind and rain. I remember at the time thinking of Elijah. It was just such a place as I pictured for him. You remember the passage ?—"And behold the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake : and after the earthquake a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a still, small voice." . . . Clearly the Master had often been there before, though we had not, and there for the first time we saw him alone with God ; and yet not alone, because to our amazed

sight it seemed as though the whole company of heaven was with him there, and that in his converse with heaven the great ones who had passed on before were somehow able to share.

People will say, I know, that such things do not happen now, and that this experience of ours was just the product of a heated imagination. The funny thing is that people nowadays seem to think that they explain things when they label them. You do not explain what has happened when you call a work of art the product of an artist's genius. It is all part of this silly modern way of looking at things apart from God, leaving out of account the one factor that is so overwhelmingly great that the other factors beside it are almost unimportant. But explain it as they may, we saw the Great Master so transfigured as he communed with God that it seemed to us that heaven was about his path. "What do

you mean by heaven ? ” you say. I am sure I do not know unless that was it.

You can refuse to credit my experience or you can accept it, but if you accept it you must remember that it is my experience, not yours, and you must let me describe it in my own way. I knew that I had seen for myself something not very dissimilar to that which Zecherson had been allowed to see on an earlier occasion; something which was the manifestation of a relationship existing between God and him whom we called the Great Teacher altogether different from anything that normally existed between a man and God. We were stupefied by what we saw. I know I blurted out some nonsense about erecting a shrine up there as though to celebrate an event and localise infinity. I had a kind of feeling that I had to say something. I was like that when greatly moved. What would reduce other men to a merciful silence or passivity used

often to lead me to excesses of speech and action, and I was just going to say or do something else which I am sure would have been equally stupid when the vision passed away. And there on the top of a mountain in North Wales sat just four persons, the Great Teacher and three of his disciples. Around them as far as the eye could reach the clouds and the mountains and the lakes and the marvellous sea ; and, so far below that its sights and sounds were indistinguishable—the haunts of men. We turned away from the visions of the mountain top and wended our way down once again to be with men.

On the way down he told us to keep what we had seen to ourselves until after this mission of his on earth had been accomplished and his death should have been, as it had been 2000 years before, swallowed up in victory. You can perhaps imagine how we three debated among ourselves how this would come about. You ask me whether

we had spoken to him about the method of his Second Coming. Oh yes ! We had, and on this occasion ; and we told him what the people who thought they knew all about such things said was going to happen at the second coming of Christ. And he spoke of Zecherson, on whom he said the world of our day had wreaked its will. And of himself he suggested that once again we should see a suffering servant of God who would be despised and whom men would reject.

By now we had reached the foot of the mountain, and there ahead of us were the other disciples and a great crowd of people and some of the ministers of religion, and there was a lot of arguing and disputing going on.

When the crowd saw the Master they ran to him and welcomed him and he asked them what all the noise was about. And then one of them, who seemed to be the important

person and who was very voluble about it all, told the Master how he had brought his epileptic son to be treated by the disciples. Apparently they had tried their hand at healing him and it had been a complete failure. The Master was very upset about it.

I have tried since to understand just what it was in the faithlessness of men which troubled him so. Take the case of this epileptic boy, but don't think of it as a "case." Think of the pathos of it, think of the poor voluble excited father with the heart-break of it all—don't criticise that father. Think of the mother and the brothers and the sisters. Think of the boy—with this thing hanging over him, with his life in this world apparently blighted and ruined, what is he going to be able to do with that life ?

Now bring the Church face to face with that boy and that boy's home. What has it got to say about it ? What can it do about it ? Can it guarantee a cure ? No,

it cannot, and let it not pretend that it can. Christ could not and did not cure everybody; nay, how few he cured. Can it affirm that no cure is possible? No, it cannot so long as it still has any contact with Christ, and let it not dare so to do. But what can it always do? It can tell of a God who is like Jesus and who cares so desperately that He really does suffer with mankind, not merely "sympathising" with people in the modern sense of a word which fashionable use has almost emptied of all meaning. And the Church can ask for and expect faith in such a God. And that kind of a God will not, nay cannot, permit suffering to have the last word. He is essentially the conqueror of disease and death. But only here and there (and more often than not for reasons which, at any rate at the time, are beyond human comprehension), will He interfere with the course of disease. Somehow its existence seems to be part of the inevitable working

out of a purpose—a purpose in the mind of a God who is love and whose attitude to suffering, as to all else, is like that of Jesus.

Is it wrong for me to see the most high God torn with suffering like Jesus was at the sight of human pain and sorrow and death—longing to go out to the sufferer with His gifts of healing and life; yet, except where in His wisdom here and there He knows that healing will in no wise hinder the largest purpose of life, *withholding* His healing powers? He must not return to the Capernahums of this world to heal their pain. The need of the world will not be met that way. It will break His heart, but He must go on with His mission. It would not be His mission at all unless in His furtherance of it His heart broke as He saw the sorrow and the suffering and the sin of the world. But then that is just what God is like, that is what He was like in Jesus of Nazareth.

It was thus I saw Him revealed in the

Great Teacher. And you see it was faith in such a God that the Great Teacher asked for. It was not that kind of a faith which his disciples had asked for or were expecting in the father who came to them for his son's healing. And it was not that kind of a faith that they got. All the father expected from them was a piece of wonder-working. He did not expect God's hand, God's power, God's intervention, and he did not get it *through them*.

But now the poor distracted father is in the presence of the Great Teacher—the child is writhing on the ground held in the grip of this awful disease—piteous sight—and the Great Teacher is in control. With a word or two of question he pulls the father together, who then blurts out his appeal. "If you can do anything, pity us, and help us."

"If you can?" reiterated the Master—
 "Oh, yes *I can*. Faith makes possible any-

thing, but it does not make desirable everything. Do you believe that whatever I do will be for the best? Even if doing things for the best means that I do not heal your child?" At that the father cried out, "Ah! yes, I do believe; even then I would believe it was for the best. Oh, help me to believe even that." But the Master did exercise his healing power and the child was cured.

When all the turmoil created by this occurrence was over and we had got back to our quarters for the night, those of our party who had failed in this healing work (and the rest of us too, for that matter, because we knew we should have failed had we been there), asked the Master for the reason of the failure. For here was obviously a case where it would seem that the healing intervention of the Church should be possible, since the healing intervention of the Master had been given. What he said was that it

was all a matter of prayer, and I think some of the others thought that it should have been, under those circumstances, then a comparatively easy matter; but James and John and I did not. We had seen the Master at prayer, and the standard set was one that we did not expect ever to reach. If it was that kind of prayer that was necessary to produce this kind of healing power, then we knew that any healing we could ever hope to mediate would be something other and something altogether less significant than that we had witnessed as we travelled about with him.

After this we went back to our own part of North Wales, tramping along by unfrequented ways. And as we walked with the Master we learnt of him.

Concerning this teaching I may say something more later, but I must mention now just two things that, as I look back, I think I can refer to this period. One was a

second warning that he gave us that now at this second coming his fate would not be very dissimilar to that which happened at his first coming. We did not believe him. In fact, what we thought—though after our experience on a previous occasion we did not say it—was that it was quite ridiculous to imagine that after two thousand years of activity on the part of the Church, and our conditions being what they were in twentieth-century Britain, anything like the tragedy that happened on Calvary could possibly be re-enacted. The other was an incident, part of which I should very much like to forget and part of which I look back to as one of the most beautiful memories that I have of him.

We had got back to my home at Porth Llanfair when this incident took place. We had just arrived there. On our way the Master had been striding on rather ahead of us; he had seemed to be meditating and to

want to be left alone, and so we disciples were walking together some way behind him and we had been having a bit of an argument. We did not think that he had been giving a thought to us, still less that he had noticed what we had been doing and heard what we had been saying, but when we got to the house he said to us. "What were you arguing about on the way here?" None of us replied. The fact was we had been quarrelling over precedence. It will perhaps surprise you that we could be thinking of such things at such a time, but you must remember that we really believed that the Great Teacher's mission was in the end going to be a success, and by success we poor fools still meant more or less what the world means by success—God knows it was in the end a success, but that was only because from a worldly point of view it was such a hopeless failure. What we were thinking about was, of course, organisation

—and, by the way, is there any good thing which is capable of doing more harm than organisation ?

Well, I won't relate to you the whole ridiculous squabble, but one of us wanted to organise in this way and another of us had a different idea, and of course the thing that really mattered in our miserable pettiness was the position each one of us was to have in the organisation. I remember that I pointed out that as we now made my house our headquarters, it had better still remain so, and, of course, as I pointed out to the others, with the best will in the world, I could hardly divest myself of the responsibilities attached to my position as the head of the house. By that time we were all getting a little snappy and one of the others suggested that my relationship to our present headquarters might be sufficient reason for removing it to another town, and so on, and all that the whole ridiculous

thing amounted to was, which of us was going to have the chance of bossing the others ?

Well, as I have told you, we did not answer the Master's question as to what we had been arguing about ; we were ashamed to. But he knew all the same, and he then proceeded to deal with us, and marvellously tenderly he did it, but I don't believe you would ever guess how.

I haven't told you much about my little home where we had our headquarters. It was a real home, you know, not a sort of office or hotel masquerading as one. But what made it the really popular place—which in spite of our wrangling it was with our party—was my little daughter Myfanwy, who was three years old. The Master loved her and she loved him. At the time of this conversation she was as usual flitting around from one to the other, for we men were all her slaves. Suddenly the

Master called her to him and took her up in his arms, and taking no notice of me, said to the others, "Have you seen old Rock playing with little Myfanwy? It's when he forgets himself and merges his own interests completely in the interests of this little child, and in doing so becomes himself a child, that he begins to show elements of greatness. As an organiser of campaigns he and his fellow-disciples are very unimportant persons. As the willing slaves of little Myfanwy he and all the rest of you become quite big men. It is then that I feel your fellowship so glorious a thing—why in this you positively become God-like." By this time little Myfanwy had settled down in the Master's arms, which incidentally rather disturbed her mother, who wanted to put her to bed, but the delinquency was overlooked. The Great Teacher was a privileged person in our house.

Then I remember John spoke about a

problem that had been worrying some of us. We had come across a man who had never been in our company who was setting himself up to be a follower of the Great Teacher and was, as such, so John said, doing quite a good piece of work. What was to be done about it? "Do nothing about it," said the Master. "Our cause has nothing whatever to fear from anybody who preaches my Gospel and does the works that I have taught you to do. This gift of mine to you is one that I wish all the world would take and use. The more it is taken and the more it is used the better. Are you not worrying about organisation again, John? It was that that you were talking about before, wasn't it? You can easily over-organise the preaching of the Gospel and the work of casting out all that is devilish in this world. Take for granted that anyone who is not actually trying to destroy us is one of us, whether he is part of our organisation or not

Don't you see that any bit of sympathy or kindness you find anywhere is in some degree a preaching of my Gospel and helps in the warfare against evil and is rewarded by God?" And then, looking at little Myfanwy, who was sitting wide-eyed and unblinking on his knee, he added, "But far better that a man should destroy himself utterly than that he should show lack of sympathy to or in any way wilfully hurt those who trust in God as this little one trusts me."

And then, as if he noticed that we seemed almost shocked at his vehemence, he expanded what he had said, but still with the same deep solemnity.

"Never minimise the awfulness of sin. Treat it always as a disease which, unless dealt with drastically, must lead to spiritual death. Treat it whenever you find it and wherever you find it, like a surgeon treats a bit of foulness in the human body. Cut it

out. It is your only hope. The alternative is the extension of that foulness throughout your whole body and ultimately death. So it is with sin. Its treatment is a matter of life and death for the spirit of man—and don't make any doubt about it, it is a painful process. Remember also that in the treatment of disease there is such a thing as preventive as well as curative medicine. And similarly there is a preventive medicine of the soul. There are preservatives of the soul's health, and one of the chief of these is to live at peace with one another. Has it seemed to you that I have almost laughingly dealt with the miserable little bickerings that you indulged in to-day and with your petty desires for position and prestige and power? Why, without realising it, you have been indulging in a vice that is absolutely gangrenous in society, and especially the Christian society. Look at the peace and innocence of this little child.

In your relations with one another, be at peace; peace is one of the greatest factors in the preventive medicine of the soul." And with that he handed the little child, whose eyes refused any longer to keep open, to her mother. But to this day, when I hear Christian people quarrelling among themselves, there comes up before my mind this picture of the Great Teacher. He is surrounded by a group of big but stupid men. Little Myfanwy is sitting wide-eyed on his knee and a mother is hovering around. And I remember that what led him to give the awful warnings he did to any who should do harm to simple trusting souls was a squabble among his disciples about which of them should be the greatest.

The next day we left Porth Llanfair. The Great Teacher never saw it again. I think he knew he would not see it again. He

was hurried in his farewells as though he feared the heartbreak of them. For there were many dear friends of his there, not only in my home but in the Churches too, where the influence of that loved disciple of his who was in the ministry was very great. The Master surprised us all when he came down in the morning by telling us that he was starting at once for England and asked us whether we would go with him. Of course we went too.

We had been prepared for a mixed reception in England, but I for one did not anticipate such immediate popularity among the common people as in point of fact the Master achieved. It was as usual, however, an embarrassment rather than an advantage. Very soon we found ourselves in an atmosphere of heckling and criticism. On one occasion, I remember, people tried to trip the Master up by asking him difficult questions about marriage and divorce. His

answer was quite uncompromising. Marriage was an institution ordained by God. It could not be annulled by any device of man.

It must have been just about then that he spoke to us again about children. I expect I remember it because I was feeling the separation from my own little child. The English mothers did not take long to discover that the Master loved children, and as for the children, they just crowded around him. We thought it was getting rather too much of a good thing, so we tried to prevent the mothers bringing them. I am not sure that I did not rather resent him loving any children other than my little Myfanwy. He was mightily indignant when he found out what we were doing and ordered us to stop our interference. There is no doubt that the presence of the children really helped him. Surrounded with so much that was false and unreal and sophis-

ticated and critical, it was clearly a relief for him to get among the children. Their presence created for him something of the atmosphere of the Realm of Heaven. It was the adults' possession of a certain childlikeness which he said was an essential requisite for their participation in his spiritual kingdom. So often his spirit seemed to be bruised by its contact with us sinful men. I think we hurt him terribly. It comforted him to take the children in his arms and fondle them and bless them.

I recall another incident which happened during that journey into England. There is a certain type of Englishman who by common admission is extraordinarily attractive. Not by any means all the boys who are turned out of the English public schools are God-fearing, clean-living, open-faced fellows, courteous and thoughtful of others; but some are, and when you meet one it seems to me you have met the finest

type of Englishman yet produced. One day such an one came to the Master and with complete unselfconsciousness and sincerity and with that entirely engaging but quite indefinable manner which the best of them have, he asked the Master what he ought to do in order to inherit the eternal life of the Realm of God. I ought to have told you that he was one who had already inherited much else in the way of wealth and rank and intelligence. Obviously, great as this inheritance was, he was not finding it satisfying for his soul. The Master asked him why he had come to him, and the young fellow said because he thought the Master was "a good man." "What do you mean by good?" said the master. "Do you mean something more or less associated with what you would call 'good form,' or do you mean something essentially God-like? It is rather the former than the latter, is it not? Very attractive but rather nega-

tive, isn't it? You know the Commandments? Yes. And you have been really trying to keep them ever since your childhood? Yes. And you look like it." And I could almost hear him say to himself (*sotto voce*), "And isn't it good to look upon," for I could see he just loved this young fellow. And then the Master said an amazing thing: "The thing you need, my dear fellow, is to go and sell everything you have, give it all away to the poor, and just bank upon heaven, and then come and follow me." And using the kind of language his hearer would understand he said, "It is not money as such that I am criticising, but this money of yours is, as you would put it, 'cramping your style.' I am afraid you won't be able to take it with you into the Realm of Heaven." The young fellow went away very distressed. He was immensely wealthy, and he longed to follow the Master.

Now I am going to find it very hard to indicate to you not only the happenings of this period of our mission in England, but still more my feelings and those of my companions in regard to them. I will not hide the fact from you that for the first time we began to be seriously disappointed and even a little distrustful of the Master. I hate saying it, but I must tell you the truth. He seemed to us to be getting a little "cranky." Take the case of this young fellow of whom I have just spoken. It did not seem to us to be right that the Master should "choke" him off in the way he did, and just because the man was rich too. Money is an uncommonly useful commodity. You can do a lot of good with money, and I never saw a person who was likelier to do good with his money than that young fellow. Besides, the Master used money himself. By no stretch of the imagination could you call our little com-

pany well-to-do, but we had enough to live a life that was quite definitely not what is described as ascetic. The Master did not seem to make things any easier to understand when turning to us he said: "It is very hard for wealthy people to enter the Realm of God. It is hard for any one, for that matter, but for a rich man it is like driving a car through a turnstile." Mind you, I am sure he was laughing at us at the time; he was, I believe, positively amused at our astonishment at his attitude to wealth, and when quite seriously we asked him who on earth then could be saved, with a queer little smile on his face he said, "Nobody!" and then with sudden solemnity he added: "It is just these impossible things that God does for men."

Then, of course, I must needs butt in again with one of my more foolish remarks. I was feeling very home-sick and I enlarged upon the sacrifice we were all making

by leaving home and coming with him, and then the Master made me feel an absolute fraud by taking my interpolation seriously. "There is not one of you who in my service has been called to leave home and loved ones who shall not receive even in this life something which, if in one sense it cannot possibly replace, yet in another sense, will be much more than the equivalent of the original sacrifice, as all parties concerned will in the end discover. But even so, you must expect more sacrifices yet—there is persecution ahead. Yes, in this life, for those who sacrifice self there are undoubted rewards, but it is in the life to come that the real reward comes—the thing this rich young man craved but could not get without paying a price he felt he could not pay—Eternal life. And as for position and prestige and wealth, these things in the end are the least important of all, and many that now possess them will be

surprised some day to find that in the Realm of God position is in direct ratio to self-abnegation."

My next clear memory is of an incident on the London road; the Master striding on ahead, we disciples trailing on behind, worried and puzzled by his strange detachment and a sense of impending evil. Suddenly he stopped and waited till we came up with him and then began once again to give us warning of the disasters that were ahead of us. He said we were going straight up to London now and that that meant the end for him. He must make one last attempt to get the leaders of the Church to lead the Church to some real revival of spiritual life, but that he feared that the attempt would not be successful, at any rate, not in his lifetime. They would just eliminate him from the organised life of the Churches. "This journey of mine," he said, "will end in mockery and insult and

heart-break and death, but through death, as once before in history, to victorious life. The way to victory must once again be the way of the Cross."

Of course we did not believe him, but we were profoundly disturbed by it all. You must not blame us, I think, too much, for not believing him. It seemed so ridiculous to us that in the twentieth century the Great Teacher, whom we believed to be nothing less than the Christ come back again to judge the world, should once again be despised and rejected by men. The thing was not possible, and I think it may have been with the idea of helping to remove these pessimistic notions from the Master's mind that James and John went to him and stupidly asked for some kind of guarantee as to their own status in any successful reconstruction of the Church that might emerge, as a result of his work in London. "Status!" said the Master.

"You do not realise what you are asking for. Status as sufferers you can have if you like; leadership in calamity if you can stand it; precedence as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death and the waters close over our souls! I cannot promise you the status that you ask. That position is for those who most fill up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ."

We others were furious when we heard what James and John had been talking about, so the Master called us round him again and dealt with us much as he did on that other occasion when he held my little Myfanwy in his arms. He reminded us that, in the world, leadership was associated with domination, and so it often was in the Church in so far as the Church had come to terms with the world; but that when the Church did at long last gain renewal of spiritual life, it would be discovered that the greatest men were the greatest servants, and

the chief of all was the servant of all. "For I myself have come again to earth," he said, "not to be served by others, but myself to serve others and to give my life to save others."

For many days now we had seen no exhibition of his healing powers, but we were soon to witness them again, for at the very next town we came to he performed another great act of healing, curing a man of his blindness. We were overjoyed at this, for it seemed to indicate a return to normality on the part of the Master. But there was much more in it than this, for there were certain features in this incident which suggested that he intended now to force his way into the notice of those who really mattered in the religious life of the nation.

One of our chief difficulties had always been the indifference of well-to-do people. This was hardly to be wondered at because,

up to this time, the great religious leaders had been seemingly indifferent to our mission, and the so-called upper classes can rarely be got to move unless they are led by those in authority. We had had plenty of criticism in various places from local clergymen and ministers, but this was not surprising, since we had been subjected to the bitterest antagonism from the leadership of certain religious factions and societies whose propaganda was sedulously spread among the rank and file of the ministry. But we had never come into contact with the *real* religious leadership of the Churches. Would to God we had, for from what I learnt after the final tragedy had taken place, I imagine we should have received more sympathy and co-operation from among them than from almost any other class in the community. We had the same difficulty with other kinds of leadership in the country. I have often been asked since how it was

that the Great Teacher never influenced either the political or the industrial and commercial leadership of the country. My answer is that he never came into contact with it. He could not get into contact with it. This was one of the great failures of our mission. I know now that there were dozens of political leaders and great business men who would have loved the Great Teacher had they permitted themselves to know him. But until the tragedy of the end, they had often not even heard of him, or if they had, it was only some vague rumour of a person who, as described to them, made no appeal to them. Indeed, it seemed that the only way of breaking through the barbed-wire entanglements which the religious and political and industrial leaders of the nation had set up around themselves, was by the spectacle of some tragedy so devastating as to demand their immediate enquiry. At any rate, this is what actually happened.

You ask me what the Master himself did to win the interest of the nation's leaders. Frankly at the time I did not think he did enough. It seemed to me he might have treated them with more deference, though when I ask myself now what I meant by this I find it hard to explain, because he treated all people with the greatest possible deference. What he would not do was to "toady" to people and to resort to "wire-pulling." To everyone he was just his ordinary self. He was not one sort of person to the man in the street and another sort of person to the leaders. I suppose I really wanted him to be another sort of person to the leaders, and perhaps the leaders wanted him to be another sort of person to them: or, what is much more likely is that they were so set about with protective mechanisms of one sort or another that only by becoming "another sort of person" and resorting to all sorts of wire-

pulling, could the Great Teacher have got into their presence. I now see that he did make what attempts he could to get behind their fortifications and force the indifferent and the exclusive to listen to him; and especially when he was approaching London. It was this that we particularly noticed in connection with his cure of the blind man, of whom I have just been speaking. (As a matter of fact this was practically the last occasion of the exercise of his healing powers, but of this, of course, at the time we had no inkling.) Normally, as I have again and again told you, he exercised his healing ministry with as little publicity as possible. On this final occasion, however, he undoubtedly acted as though he desired publicity presumably in order that the people of London might await his arrival expectantly. (I suppose he did not worry about the fact that, as a result, when he arrived in London the people would expect a healing

mission, and that since he was not prepared to heal peoples' bodies in order to gain popularity, their welcome would soon turn to disappointment and dislike.) He wanted, I imagine, to make certain that his entry into London would be no hole-and-corner affair. He was determined that at long last others, besides the rank and file and his persistent antagonists, should be forced somehow or other to take some notice of his mission.

We, his disciples, were completely taken in by his apparent change of attitude at the time of this healing of the blind man and of his subsequent entry into London. The blind man, I should have told you, made no secret of his belief that the Great Teacher was none other than the Christ returned to earth. And that the Master apparently openly accepted this designation, seemed another indication to us that he was changing his plan of campaign, and naturally we

were very pleased about it : we were still more pleased when, a few miles outside London, he delayed going any further until his actual arrival could be notified to the many sympathisers we had there. This was much more satisfactory from our point of view than anything we had dared to hope for, having regard to the pessimistic mood he had seemed to us lately to be in. We had feared all along he would try to slip into London unobserved, but it was clear now that he had no intention of doing this.

It was certain now that London was to know of his arrival, and so it did, and a number of Welshmen and others made much of his coming. It was indeed a sort of triumphal entry. We discovered that he had made careful arrangements beforehand in regard to this arrival of his. The last part of our journey was done by train and there was a big crowd at the station

to receive him. In fact they hailed him as a sort of demagogue.

The rest of that day of his arrival he spent seeing something of the religious life of the city. We felt that he was rather pottering about doing nothing in particular, instead of following up the opportunities afforded him by his great welcome. We went out into the suburbs at night and stayed with some friends of his. Going into the city again the next day, we passed a shop window, the decoration of which suggested the existence of food within, and being hungry we entered, but there was nobody to serve us. "Hardly the way to do business," the Master observed. "This place will go bankrupt. A decorated shop-window is not enough to keep a business going."

That day, I thought, was still more of a failure than even the previous evening had been. There was a great religious conference in session, and whether he had pre-

viously been invited to speak or whether he just took the opportunity afforded him by debate, I do not know. But he did speak; and almost mercilessly he attacked the religious life of the great city, lashing with his scorn even some of the religious leaders.

It was one of the most terrible things I have ever seen. He accused the Church of having come to terms with the world and of using the methods of the world to further its spiritual purposes. One of his chief attacks was upon the Churches' methods of raising money. He seemed to think that they were often altogether carnal and entirely out of place in a religious institution. "Money," he said, "should be sought as an offering freely given by its donors, an inevitable expression of a desire on their part to serve God with all their substance and to treat everything they possess as ultimately his."

He seemed to think that much of the

organisation of the Churches for raising money was merely worldly and that its controllers were going the wrong way to work; that the most obvious thing about the Churches to-day was just one huge system for dragging money out of people, while what they were meant to be, and must be, was Houses of Prayer and Fellowships of service. It was the whole organisation of religion in the great city that so disturbed him. It seemed to him so materialistic, so secular, so Godless, as though the Church had almost lost faith in the forces of the Spirit and was now pinning her faith to "big business."

He detected this secularisation of the Church at every point. It had even accepted the world's Nationalism and Racism. A Church should be a House of Prayer for the nations, he said; actually most of the Churches were to all intents and purposes organised with reference solely to England, and the

universal aspect of their faith and service would hardly have occurred to any of them if it had not been that constant pin-pricks had been administered by outside organisations which had been more or less forced to usurp the place of the Church. Religion had become selfish through and through, and often steeped in luxury—which was a very different thing from beauty, though even beauty under certain circumstances might be luxury. How often the praises of God did not come from the hearts of worshippers, but, sometimes in language that was false or meaningless, from the mouths of paid choirs, to whom this duty had been transferred by people who were too indolent to sing or who were not allowed to sing in the simple ways which the good God had made possible for them.

How often the prayers to God were not prayers at all, the so-called worshippers being content to let some minister or clergyman

deputise for them; and he who deputised, perhaps in consequence of the unreality of it all, was quite unable, sometimes indeed seemed almost unwilling, to gather his flock with him at the Throne of Grace.

How often the Sacraments were marred by the atmosphere of controversy in which they were administered and were set up and used as the chief barrier to fellowship within the Church ~~or~~ for the waving of a party flag. How often luxury and tawdriness had replaced simplicity and beauty. The home of the Spirit had become a museum of material things. The Houses of God had come to be like robbers' dens. They were meant for the common worship of the family of God, they had become like Masonic lodges hiding their mystic rites from what was more often than not an uninterested world.

But perhaps his most tremendous indictment of the Churches was in regard to what

their members were pleased unctuously to describe as "their unhappy divisions." He implied that they did not really care whether "the body of Christ" was divided or not; they had never entered into the heart-break of it. Honest convictions he was the last person in the world to try to destroy or to minimise, but what was so often absent in those who held these honest convictions which divided Christians to-day was a sense of the appalling character of the division that had resulted from their holding such convictions. A man may honestly be convinced that a certain course of action is good for him, but when his doctor tells him that if he does not give it up he has not six months more of life he thinks of his earlier conviction in a new way. Divisiveness of one kind was paralysing each individual Church and divisiveness of another kind was paralysing the whole Church of Christ. It was in the light of

this deadly creeping paralysis of disunion, so often associated with envy and jealousy, that people must view their religious convictions afresh; and it was here that once again he referred to what he had once before described as the unforgivable sin.

Some of the leading men in the conference were very angry at the speech and started to think out ways and means of dealing with him. They realised that this would be a difficult task and they feared greatly the effect of his words. They had reason, too, for there were not a few in the Churches who felt with him, but who had never had the courage to say so, or just felt it hopeless to make the attempt to do anything, and there were some among the Churches' chief leaders who were secretly glad to hear such things said, even if they had little hope that they would be heeded. Such a statement as this last reveals the full magnitude of the task the Master had set

before him. The Church's leaders were so often almost forcibly imprisoned in their own religious system. Many of them were straining at the bars which held them in, but the bars held firm. Some of them, it is true, rejoiced in their imprisonment, but many of them—perhaps most of them—longed for freedom.

Ordinary people were rather surprised at the Master's denunciation. Most of them did not attend services at any of the Churches, but they did not like to hear them denounced. They had become national institutions.

As opportunity offered, the Master continued this campaign day by day, each evening going out to the suburbs. I remember the second morning we went up to London we passed the shop that had disappointed us on the previous day, and we found it bankrupt and closed. I mentioned this to the Master, rather expecting

him to moralise further on the uselessness of shop-window religion. Instead he spoke about the limitless possibilities of prayer. He was still thinking of the condition of the Churches. He did not under-estimate the mountains of difficulties that lay ahead in the attempt to make them Houses of God. The only power that could do it was believing prayer. But that *could* do it. Then he added, "But you must have forgiveness in your heart, too, while you pray, for you have yourselves so much need of forgiveness."

Looking back, I cannot help but dwell upon the miracle of his forgiveness of his enemies in London. They now began to make his life a burden with their incessant attacks. They first challenged his right to judge of their actions, which he countered by telling them that their condoning of the death of Zecherson proved, at any rate, that *they* had no right to judge. They did not

like having their cowardice in respect of moral issues such as this that he had raised exposed for public gaze. Then he reminded them of the parable of the wicked husbandmen, of God sending the prophets to the old Israel of God, and finally sending His own son whom they cast out of the vineyard and slew. "What shall the Lord of the vineyard do to these wicked husbandmen? He will come and destroy them and give the vineyard unto others." "Yes," said the Master, "and why should He not do the same with the husbandmen of the new Israel of God—the Church itself—if her husbandmen now fail to give Him the fruits of the vineyard?" At this they became very angry.

Of course while the crowds still hung on his words they could not ignore him, which is probably what they would now have preferred to do. So they next tried to set the crowds against him. To do this they attempted to

trap him into taking up the unpopular side in a political dispute, but this did not work; indeed it enhanced his reputation among such as were capable of appreciating sobriety of judgment. The next attack tried to involve him in a hair-splitting theological argument. One or two of his chief enemies being prominent theologians, it occurred to them that it would make him look rather foolish and undermine his influence if they publicly trapped him in some abstruse theological argument, but this was an absolute failure. In fact his cross-examination of them made them look very foolish.

I hope I have made it clear that not by any means all of the religious leaders were opposed to him. I remember one especially of a very different sort who asked him questions at the close of that day. This one was really anxious to know just what things, among all the multitudinous suggestions



that were made about the life and work of Christians, were really fundamental.

The Great Teacher answered. "Loving God with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength, and loving one's neighbour as oneself." The Master had great hopes of this man.

And now again the Master himself, as it were, entered the lists; he told the religious leaders, who were trying to undermine his influence, that they had been trying to reduce Christ himself to the dimensions of their own religious attainments. He accused them of loving and working for prestige and power and position in the Church. Others there were, he said, who were sheer parasites hoodwinking the old women in their congregations, and this made him think of the saintliness and selflessness of some of the poor old women in the Churches and to compare them with some of those who had more important

places on the Church's subscription lists, but whose sense of the stewardship of wealth was negligible.

I have told you all these incidents, which are but a fraction of his indictment of the Church life of that day, without comment; the fact is they came with such a rush, one after the other, with utter fearlessness and directness. They were like a torrent. From the way I have told them you might imagine that we disciples were uninfluenced by them. On the contrary, we were greatly worried by them. However true all that he said might be, we could not see what was the use of the Great Teacher running foul of influential religious people in this way. We thought it extraordinarily bad policy. Indeed he seemed to us to be very queer during these days.

You can perhaps imagine that we disciples coming up from the country were greatly impressed by London. I remember once

pointing out to the Master the magnificence of the buildings, and the huge stones with which they were built. One of these stones, as I remember it, was at the time being raised by an immense crane. The Master replied that the world's idea of bigness was all wrong. "This kind of bigness does not last," he said. "It has got a time limit and a short one. It is only the spiritual that lasts."

Later we went back to our garden in South London on the ridge overlooking the great city. The atmosphere was exceptionally clear and the city in all its grandeur lay stretched out before us. I remember that on this occasion my brother Andrew was with James and John and me as we talked with the Master. Naturally we reverted to the subject of our earlier discussion on the impermanence of all this material greatness which London so marvellously exhibited. Our point was that there was real gain to humanity in all this tremendous

scientific achievement which modern London displayed, and that at any rate what was good in it must have an element of permanence. The Master did not deny this, but he seemed to think this material good relatively unimportant. So far as I could understand him he implied that as things were, there was not enough of the intrinsically good in all this material advance to prevent the inevitable crash of this modern civilisation of ours.

He told us that we were to expect modern prophets who would try to teach us otherwise and would either most speciously insist that we should trust in the solid tangible results of material scientific achievement rather than in the things of the Spirit, or else would try to persuade us that a quiet continuance of the Churches' present life and achievement was all that was required.

And then he spoke about the war and all the horror of it, and of Europe arming

for another war and the whole of Africa and the East being taught by Europe and America by word and deed that it was material scientific advance that really mattered, and that amongst such things, what counted most of all were big battalions and mechanised armies and control of the air and the latest bombs and poison gas, and that the next war would be won by the nation whose scientific achievement was greatest. "Astonishing," said he, "that nations should desire this kind of honour, this kind of prestige, for the so-called 'greatest nation'—that nation that wins in the next great war—will lose everything, for in winning she will have brought about the destruction of the foundations of a civilisation of which she herself will be the coping stone. And the greatest fall will be her own, for she will have the furthest to fall."

And then suddenly he turned to us :

"Look to yourselves," he said. He had never hesitated to show us again and again how he feared the Church becoming increasingly secularised and satisfied to be so. Again and again in history the Church had come to terms with the world and had chosen to use the weapons of the world to gain worldly rather than spiritual ends. Often in doing so she had seemed to achieve greatness, but it was a material greatness, and it had no permanence. The Master then referred to certain happenings in the Church of our time which indicated that then, as much as or more than ever, the Church was relying on the world's weapons of prestige and wealth and precedence and material advance.

"Yet in spite of all this," he said, "the one hope of the world is still the Church. But a renewed regenerated Church it will have to be, a Church which, given another chance, will at long last take that chance,

and show a world, that has become so materially great, that it cannot live the real and permanent greatness of spiritual achievement." But this renewal of spiritual life in the Church could only be accomplished at great cost to its leaders and its members. It would mean setting over against a world mobilised for material warfare the spectacle of a Church mobilised for world evangelism. And this spiritual warfare of world evangelism would entail tremendous sacrifices and dangers and misunderstandings. But if the Church held on, trusting only to the weapons of the spirit, caring nothing for the world's methods which rested upon "clever diplomacy" or "material power" and "scientific achievement" in the end the Church would win.

It was about this inevitable victory won at awful cost, that the Master then began to speak to us using as I remember almost the language of ancient apocalyptic, as

though the ordinary language of every day was not adequate to describe the terrific character of this warfare that must take place between the Church and the world. In strange and weird words he pictured the breakdown throughout the world of long-established non-Christian rule in government, in thought and in morals. Whenever indeed anything was opposed to the direct or indirect influence of the Christian Gospel, in the end it disappeared, and "worldly" authority was everywhere replaced by the authority of Christ. He pictured a vast expansion of the Church throughout the world and the messengers of the Church being sent out far and wide to every part of the world and in every realm of thought and life to claim and capture all for Christ—a great cosmic struggle in which the Church just gave to God all her resources of prayer and sacrificial service and, using only the weapons of the

Spirit, flung herself into the heart of the fight. It was then that I began to get just an inkling of the meaning of all that he had said to us lately when he foretold the nearness of disaster and death so far as he was concerned. Renewal of life in the Church would only be purchased at great sacrifice. Was the Master himself to be the first casualty in that way of Renewal? The thing did not seem possible and I thrust it from my mind.

Afterwards we discovered that on that very night some of his bitterest enemies had had a private meeting together in the house of one of their number to perfect their plans for his undoing and to undermine his influence and bring it to nought.

I can see now that the Master himself knew that his end was very near. That was why he was so wonderfully helped by the uncalculating devotion of a woman whom he himself had helped spiritually and

who seemed to sense as no one else did what was passing in his mind at this time. Her thought of him and her complete absence of any thought of herself must have made him feel that all was not in vain. And I think it made him feel that there was a human as well as a divine hand stretched out to him in the dark. It was a visible foretaste of the permanent results and world-wide influence of his ministry in the hearts of men and women. And it came to him just when he was facing death and apparent disaster. That woman's action he knew had eternal and world-wide significance.

All this time, though of course we did not know it, a fellow-disciple of ours was in league with our enemies. He attended the meeting of theirs which I have mentioned before, and was all the time giving them the benefit of his special knowledge of the Master himself and of his movements.

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Master told us to go and make arrangements so that he could have with us a special communion service that evening. He had a friend in South London who had a large house on one of the hills that overlook the city. In this house was a little room set apart as a chapel, and he wanted the use of this. We made the arrangements, and when the evening came he and all the twelve of us disciples arrived there and went into the chapel. It was as we knelt there that quite calmly he told us that one of us who were kneeling with him was in league with his enemies. To that one, who, of course, at the time, was unknown to the rest of us, he gave an awful warning.

Then he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to us and said, "Think of this as my body. I am going away from you, and after I am gone, desperately will you need the strength of

my presence. I pledge myself to be with you as you break bread thus in memory of me." And then he took the cup and gave thanks to God and then passed it round to us and we all drank of it. "It is my very life which now I must pour out for the world," he said. "This is the last time that any wine will pass my lips in this life. When in memory of me in after days you pass this cup around, I pledge myself through it to pour my very life into your souls." We then sang a hymn and went out. He and some others of us passed on into the garden below the house. "All of you are going to forsake me now," he said. "No, we are not," said I. "You can count on me anyway. Frankly I do not know what is worrying you, but I shall stand by you through thick and thin." "No, dear old Rock, you won't. In a few hours' time again and again you will swear that you never knew me." I protested that I would

do nothing of the sort, and so, for that matter, did the others.

There was a little copse at the bottom of the garden. He had evidently been there before. He told James and John and me to wait on a seat near-by while he prayed. He seemed greatly to need our presence—and then he became absorbed in prayer. We did not kneel with him, we could not. His prayers, if you understand me, seemed to us to be in a world apart from us. He himself felt this, I think, but asked us none the less to remain near at hand and try to pray. We heard him pray audibly—pray that some utter and awful bitterness that he sensed was near, might, if it were God's will, be taken from him—we sat down just where we were and we tried to pray but could not, nor did we feel we could talk to one another, but we dare not leave him. After about an hour we dropped off to sleep.

The next I knew was that the Master had hold of my shoulders, waking me. He seemed to need me awake beside him and desperately, too, he wanted my prayers, but it was, even then, of me more than of himself that he thought—how, without watchings and prayer on my part, could he save me from falling into the bitter temptation that he saw was so near at hand? More than once that shattering night this happened, and then, as it was just beginning to get light, he got up and quite calmly he said, "It is all over now. Witness my betrayal. I can hear the voice of the traitor: and there are others with him: and they are coming: down through the garden." And there the fellow was, and a number of other people. He went straight up to the Master and put his hand on the Master's arm (to this hour I do not know how even the Master prevented himself from shaking off that hand). Then the others came up.

There were among them one or two of his chief enemies among the religious leaders, but most of them were underlings, and there were many Press men. "Why this early visit?" said the Master. "Have I not been accessible during the week? A little over-dramatic, is it not?" Then with a flourish they displayed to him the early editions of the papers, and asked him what he had to say about what was in them; and whether he would come to the Congress, where he was down to speak that day; and whether he would take that opportunity to reply to the charges made against him; and so on and so forth.

Of course all of us disciples snatched at the papers, and were simply incredulous and amazed at what we read there. It was astonishing, devastating. The first newspaper heading that caught my eyes ran something like this: "False Messiah unmasked." "Church leaders expose religious

fraud." "Queer happenings among the Welsh mountains." I cast my eyes through it. It was terrible beyond words, and it was the most amazingly clever thing I had ever read. The authority for all that was said was practically unquestionable: some of the most important people in the land had, it appeared, themselves urged the newspapers to expose this fraud. One of his own intimate disciples who had been with him all the time was the authority for the incidents cited. (I wondered how much they paid the fellow for good "copy" like that.)

There it all was, apparently proved up to the hilt, and I could see the ordinary Englishman reading his newspaper that morning. The Master's teaching was made to appear a mixture of blasphemy and sedition: there were dark hints of something worse: there were suggestions concerning his friendships with fallen women and moral reprobates and

questions as to how the mission had been financed; jokes about his humble origin and the heights to which he aspired; dark hints of mental derangement in the past and possible drug addiction. He was said to have queer mystical séances with his disciples, and he was known to have lived a rather vagrant life, and by the time the newspapers had done with him the Great Teacher had not a shred of reputation left, and yet in a sense every word they said was founded on some action of his, something like which really happened, or some saying of his something like what he really said.

The thing was simply devilishly clever, and it had come out on the very morning of the day he was advertised to speak at the Great Congress in the Albert Hall. The reporters wanted to know whether he would still go to the Congress. He said, "Yes."

Can you imagine the horror of the pressmen's chattering questionings! And the

spurt of the flashlight—the clicking of the cameras and the roar of the motor bicycles as they took their spoils away to the presses that were waiting. That day was an absolute nightmare to me. Don't ask me to tell you its details.

He went to the Congress. He mounted the platform. Before permitting him to speak the chairman quite naturally asked him for an explanation, and believe me or not, it is a fact—he refused to give one. Then the audience literally howled at him. I was just within one of the doorways. I saw what happened. In the end, when the chairman himself accused him in so many words of being a blasphemous fraud, he did just say that there was no fraud and that God would vindicate him some day. After that there was pandemonium, and the police, in order to prevent him being mishandled, had to take charge of him.

It was just before that that one of the

girls who had something or other to do with the organisation of the meeting, seeing me peering through the doorway, said audibly to a friend: "There's one of his disciples; they have got his picture in this morning's *Pictorial*. Look, here it is," and she showed it to me. "What rot," I said; "I never heard of the man before," and I slunk outside, but she followed me with that wretched paper of hers, and one or two of them joined her in baiting me. "This is one of his precious Welsh disciples," she said, and once again I denied it. I had had enough of this, and I was just bolting when I had the bad luck to run up against a group of press-men. They had overheard something of my previous interrogation, and now one of them caught sight of me—"Oh, yes; he is one of them," he said. I rounded on the fellow in a fury and told him too that he was talking blithering nonsense and that he had better damn well mind his own

business, and just then I saw a little batch of police scurrying past getting the Master away, and I caught sight of the Master's face and I just broke up. Oh, yes! I told you I would prove to you later the depths of cowardice to which I could descend.

At the police station they interrogated him, but he would not answer questions, and that no note of sordidness might be missing they put him in a cell for the night.

I don't remember where I spent that night or what I did. But there was worse to come. Early the next morning I was out on the streets loitering around, keeping somewhere near that police station to which they had taken him. I had got the morning papers, and the accounts of those of them that write up such things were simply

shattering. The whole mission was wrecked—smashed—finished. I wandered into some shop or other—I don't know where—and got some sort of food—I don't know what. I did not know where the other disciples were, and did not care.

I wandered out into the streets again. A boy was rushing down the street with an early edition of an evening paper, shouting and carrying a placard. These were the words on the placard: "Welsh Messiah Dead. Two murderers executed." I got a paper.—Stop press news.—*He* had been found dead in his cell, and at some gaol or other, that morning, two wife-murderers had suffered the extreme penalty. It was only in the stop press. There were no details.

I came to myself. I walked into that police station as though I had bought the

place—introduced myself as one of the Welsh Messiah's most intimate friends and heard what had happened.

The details all came out, of course, at the inquest.

They found him in the morning on his knees—quite dead. The doctor said it was cardiac rupture. In non-technical language he had died of a broken heart. It was said that he had probably been praying all night. He had got his Bible open at a place in the Gospel of St. Mark, where it tells the parable of the wicked husbandmen and faintly scribbled across the page (whether that night or earlier I know not) were these words: "*Lord of the Vineyard—The Church—Another chance.*"

The coroner in his summing up read the relevant portions of the parable and said that the deceased probably thought that the

Church was in danger of failing the Lord of the vineyard even as the old Israel of God had done, and that this had so wrought upon him that he had agonised in prayer beyond his physical strength, hoping and praying that God might give the Church another chance to fulfil her obligations. The strain, he said, had burst his heart.

In accordance with the medical evidence the verdict was^e given—"Death from natural causes," but a policeman standing beside me said under his breath, "Natural causes be damned—unnatural goodness if I know anything about it."

Outside the court were his mother and some of his women friends.

A rich friend of the Master took charge at that point with a complete indifference to criticism, which reminded me of a certain rich young man whom the Master not so

long ago had met and loved—and we buried him.

The women were not with us at the burying, but they knew the place where we had laid him, and on Sunday morning very early they went to put some flowers on his grave. And then they had an extraordinary experience. Their flowers never decked his grave. For as they approached it they saw a young man standing on the very spot where it seemed to them the grave should have been. He told them not to be worried or frightened. "You are looking," he said, "for the grave of the Great Teacher who died of a broken heart in a prison cell last Friday. He has risen from the dead. He is not here. He is alive. He is alive for evermore." Then simply and painstakingly he tried to make them listen.

"This was his grave," he said, "but he

is not here now. He has gone back to North Wales. You will see him there if you go back there too. Go now and tell his disciples of this, and don't forget to tell Rockwell."

Then terror gripped them and they turned and just ran out of the cemetery, not saying a word about what had happened to anyone whom they met, for they were afraid of . . .

Something tremendous has happened.

I must reach you. . . . I have something to tell you others . . . James, John, Andrew. . . . But oh, I am so tired . . .

must reach you somehow. It isn't the end . . . must reach you somehow.

It's Sunday.

"And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought spices that they might come and anoint him. . . ."

What's that I was saying ?

"And very early on the first day of the week they came . . . they came to the tomb. . . . When the sun was risen . . . Sunday. . . . When the sun was risen . . .

"Hallo ! what's up ? "

"Wake up, old man ! "

"Where am I ? "

"Well, strange as it may seem to you, you are lying out under the fir trees on the mount of Olives. You are at the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council—and I regret to say you have been asleep during conference time.—"Yes !

and what's this? a Bible! open at the Gospel of St. Mark."—

"Yes; I am afraid you must have gone to sleep studying your Bible—studying the Gospel of St. Mark apparently.—A good preparation for the meeting, I must say!"

"What meeting?"

"What meeting! Good gracious me! Why, they are all waiting for you in the hall. I have come out to find you. You are speaking this morning: on *the Home Base of Missions.*"

"The Home Base of Missions. My God! The Home Base of Missions."

"What's the matter; have you forgotten to prepare an address?"

"Yes. No. No. I've dreamed one. My God! The Home Base of Missions! *Lord of the Vineyard! The Church! Another chance!*"

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green ?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen ?
And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold !
Bring me my arrows of desire !
Bring me my spear ! O clouds, unfold !
Bring me my chariot of Fire !
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE.